It Seems to Heywood Broun

The Nation

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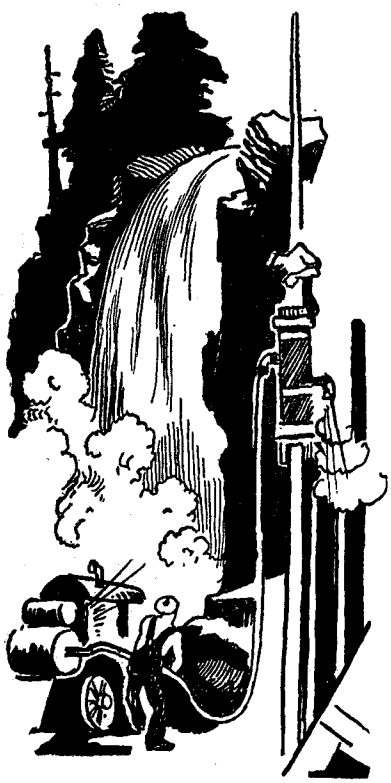

Power Control Breaks Down

The failure of the Federal Power Commission

by Laurence Todd

The Hoover Hippodrome

by Paul Y. Anderson

"America Conquers Britain" *by* Ludwell Denny

reviewed by William MacDonald

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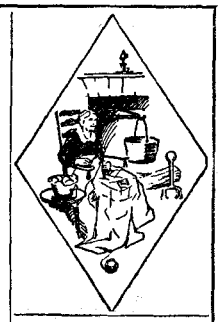

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The Nation

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AN ENTIRELY ADMIRABLE DECISION was handed down by the United States Circuit Court of Appeals on March 3 in reversing the conviction of Mrs. Mary Ware Dennett for sending obscene matter through the mails. The decision, written by Judge Augustus N. Hand, and concurred in by Judges Thomas Swan and Harrie B. Chase, is one of the most thoroughgoing and handsome rebukes on record to the sort of obscenity snoopers who have been so noisomely active of late. The decision says in part:

> The defendant's discussion of the phenomena of sex is written with sincerity and feeling and with an idealization of the marriage relation and sex emotions. . . . The old theory that information on sex matters should be left to chance has greatly changed and it is commonly thought that much was lacking in the old mystery and reticence. . . . While it may be thought that portions of the tract ["The Sex Side of Life"] go into unnecessary details that would better have been omitted, it may be fairly answered that the curiosity of many adolescents would not be satisfied without full explanation, and that no more than that is really given. . . . The statute we have to construe [that defining "obscene and lascivious matter"] was never thought to bar from the mails everything that might stimulate sex impulses. . . . Like everything else, the law must be construed reasonably, with a view to the general objects aimed at . . . it must not be construed to interfere with serious instruction regarding sex matters unless the terms it is conveyed in are clearly indecent.

These are only the high spots in a completely sane, reasoned, and farsighted discussion of Mrs. Dennett's pamphlet and the implications arising therefrom. Her counsel, Morris L. Ernst, declared that the decision was a severe blow at the powers of federal censors in the Post Office Department. It is time that such chastisement was administered.

ENCOURAGING NEWS comes from Geneva that the League of Nations committee of eleven jurists which is engaged in coordinating the Kellogg pact and the Covenant has gone so far as to propose an amendment to Article XII of the Covenant declaring that "in no case" can League members resort to war to settle their differences. It is, of course, a far cry from this preliminary action to its adoption by all the members of the League. But sincerity speaks out of this action, which is obviously a genuine attempt to put the right kind of teeth into the Kellogg pact. The whole trouble at London and elsewhere is that the nations, including our own, which signed the Kellogg pact did so with their tongues in their cheeks. It is hard to see how if this amendment to Article XII goes through, League members can any longer continue to go ahead with their armaments as if the Kellogg pact did not exist. More than that, the amendment, it is reported, further strengthens the pact because it excludes all the reservations permitting defensive wars, or wars in undefined regions of vital interest to the British Empire—the reservations now attached to the Kellogg-Briand treaty. Even a phrase to the effect that members of the League must have recourse only to pacific means for the settlement of any dispute likely to lead to a rupture of relations marks a step forward.

AN EMPHATIC PROTEST against the proposed betrayal of the United States by an abandonment of the reduction program at the Naval Disarmament Conference has been cabled to London by 1,200 Americans under the leadership of Carrie Chapman Catt, Raymond Fosdick, James G. MacDonald of the Foreign Policy Association, and Professor James T. Shotwell. The document again recalls to the delegates Mr. Hoover's words of promise to the American people that reduction "cannot be too low for us" and declares that this policy of reduction "has had and continues to have the overwhelming indorsement and support of the American people." The Harvard Liberal Club and the Radcliffe College International Club have sent to President Hoover a petition, signed by 62 members of the faculties of the two colleges and 765 students, demanding that our delegates stand behind a drastic reduction of the capital ships and asking "why our delegation is running counter to a policy so recently declared." At Yale, through the Liberal Club, 300 students have similarly petitioned President Hoover. Senator Borah, too, has taken a hand by a radio speech in which he declared that failure to bring

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about substantial cuts would be "nothing less than a catastrophe"; and well asked his hearers: "What is national security when the whole world is armed to the teeth?" In London the answer is talk of a three-power agreement between Japan, England, and the United States. That would be better than nothing. But the delegation must realize that a large section of public opinion here will not be satisfied with anything less than a genuine move toward disarmament.

NOT A SUPER-BANK, but an institution of large powers and even larger hopes notwithstanding, is the burden of the description of the Bank for International Settlements which Jackson E. Reynolds, chairman of the committee which drafted the plan of organization, gave recently in New York. The bank charter is to be perpetual and its statute is so drawn as to be hard to amend, at least to the bank's disadvantage. As far as words and promises can go, the bank will be free of requisitions or other interference in time of war, thus setting a standard which it is to be hoped may be applied to all other forms of property not directly intended for military use. What will keep the institution from becoming a super-bank is, apparently, the fact that it cannot issue currency in any form (London insisted that the bank should not be allowed to deal in acceptances) and may not engage in any financial transaction in any country represented on its directorate without the consent of the central bank of that country; but Mr. Reynolds sees it as "coordinating the central banks of the world" and eventually holding a large part of the world's gold. The Federal Reserve system has no official connection with the management of the World Bank, but there is every reason to believe that the choice of the two American directors of the bank, Gates W. McGarrah and Leon Fraser, the former of whom is slated for the presidency, was made with Mr. Hoover's approval. Both Mr. McGarrah and Mr. Fraser are men of the highest standing, and no better selections could well have been made.

ENFORCEMENT OF NARCOTIC LAWS by the federal government is due for a shake-up if the presentment of a federal grand jury at New York on February 21 is given attention at Washington. "Wholesale padding of the records of the local federal narcotic office in New York" for several months, beginning in April, 1929, under orders telephoned to the Assistant Deputy Commissioner by the Deputy Commissioner at Washington, is the startling charge which the grand jury urged should be laid before Secretary Mellon. "Evidences of gross dereliction and incompetence" on the part of some of the agents attached to the New York office, including evidence that "at least one of the agents is a user of drugs," form a part of this unsavory exposure. A few days after this presentment was made the newspapers reported that a woman federal agent, herself an addict, was under investigation on suspicion of peddling drugs in night clubs and among theatrical people. The reply of the Treasury Department is amazing. Colonel L. G. Nutt of Washington, the official whom the grand jury has branded with fraud, has been given a roving commission in the prohibition service, and the three federal officials responsible for the exposure have been transferred, one to Chicago, one to Kansas City, and the third to Honolulu.

BROADSIDE ATTACKS on prohibition exceeding in vigor and severity anything known to our legislative history marked the opening hearings before the House Judiciary Committee on the administration of the prohibitory laws. No one of the speakers went quite so far as Frederic R. Coudert, Sr., of New York, who declared that "it is easy to predict that the government, legislative or administrative, that attempted something like real enforcement would be swept out of existence at the next election, and if that were not so they would have on their hands a civil war," but a long list of prominent speakers fell only a little short of Mr. Coudert in denouncing the system and its effects. Dr. Samuel Harden Church, president of the Carnegie Institute at Pittsburgh, arraigned "the questionable methods of enforcement, all on money appropriated by Congress," and insisted that "the dignity and tranquillity of the nation have been destroyed by conditions which never have occurred before in times of peace." The president of the Pennsylvania Railroad, General W. W. Atterbury, told the committee that he could not find that prohibition "has made a particle of difference with the discipline" of the road, while the Rev. Dr. John A. Ryan, of the Catholic University of America, affirmed that "prohibition sears everything it touches and confuses the mental processes of higher officials."

A GOOD BEGINNING has apparently been made by President Hoover's commission in Haiti. Overruling the autocratic General Russell, they insisted that the Haitians be allowed to hold a parade in protest against the occupation, and an orderly and extraordinarily impressive demonstration by 1,200 women offering public prayers and then passing in procession before the commission's headquarters was the result. In consequence of the fair attitude of the commission, the Haitian opposition is reported as having given up its original intention to "boycott" the hearings. A striking body of protest has already been put into the record from leaders representing powerful groups opposed to intervention. They condemn General Russell as a virtual dictator and declare that President Borno is simply a puppet in his hands. As for the Council of State which President Borno has asked to elect his successor on April 14, they assert that the council is simply a body of clerks for the President, and that unless a popular election is allowed bloodshed will certainly result. The testimony already taken is bound to be impressive to any fair-minded person.

AMERICAN COMMUNISTS are annoying and silly, but they will not become dangerous unless the authorities give them importance by attempting their forcible suppression. Recent demonstrations in New York and elsewhere have led to some lamentable instances of police brutality, but in other cases have been met with notable good sense and good temper. We hope that progressive annoyance may be met with progressive good humor on the part of the officers of the law. Mayor Walker's two-faced public statement, however, does not help. It is likely to encourage the use of violence. Certainly no thoughtful American can have anything but condemnation for the provocative blast of Matthew Woll, acting president of the National Civic Federation and vice-president of the American Federation of Labor, who sends to commercial organizations in 500 cities and to all members of Congress a letter designed

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to stir up hatred against Soviet Russia as being responsible for these outbreaks. In Los Angeles a reactionary school board has prepared a fresh assault on our liberties by undertaking to prevent any young person of communist beliefs from getting a high-school diploma. Such certificates henceforth will read as follows: "This diploma is awarded in consideration of a satisfactory record in character and citizenship and the completion of a course of study as prescribed by the Board of Education." Superintendent Bouelle, according to a dispatch, regards the new wording as a guaranty that no student known to harbor communist beliefs will get a diploma. Does the Los Angeles school board know nothing of the long history of persecution for opinion's sake?

WISE AND FARSIGHTED is Stalin's decision to put on the brakes in Russia and to slow down the collectivization and nationalization of the farms. Walter Duranty declares in the New York *Times* that the statesmanship of this remarkable article of Stalin's "appears to put Stalin on a level with Lenin himself." That may well be, but the truth is that any child could see that Moscow has been going ahead so fast as to jeopardize the whole Communist experiment. Already Stalin says that 50 per cent of the peasant holdings have been collectivized and more than 3,500,000 tons, or 90 per cent, of the cleaned seed have already been delivered to the collectives for the spring sowing, something which appeared, Duranty reports, "quite impossible three weeks ago." Stalin is opposed at present to pushing collectivization to a further extreme of communism and of sharing even pigs, poultry, and houses with the collectives. Similarly Stalin has only sneers for those Communists who would start collectives by pulling down church bells and "calling themselves r-r-revolutionaries." This is statesmanship, for a wise statecraft knows when to retreat.

THE PRESIDENT has appointed another business "go-getter" to an important diplomatic post. John N. Willys, the automobile builder who sold out his motor interests last July for a neat $21,000,000, is to round out his career as United States Ambassador to Poland. This is in several aspects the worst of Mr. Hoover's bad diplomatic appointments, for Mr. Willys is by education, training, and experience totally unqualified for this job. Poland is in a difficult and dangerous financial situation. It is beset with grave economic and international dangers and it is in the hands of a dictatorship. To make matters more difficult, the lot of the Jews in Poland at present is direful—worse even than in 1922. Race discrimination is everywhere prevalent; economic opportunities are completely denied to all Jews, especially to Jewish women. In consequence their American relatives are deeply concerned and are most eager to have a skilled diplomat at Warsaw who will be of real help. They have nothing to hope for from Mr. Willys.

THE TRIBUTES TO PRESIDENT MASARYK on his eightieth birthday will be numerous and warm. He has been head of the Czecho-Slovak Republic since 1918, and is its founder in that he was, in 1914, the organizer of the Czecho-Slovak movement for independence and later convinced Woodrow Wilson and the Allied leaders of the desirability of building up this new state. There is no question that the government he reared has been the stablest and probably the cleanest and best of the new ones set up after the war. In this he has, of course, had the support of a highly competent foreign minister, Eduard Benes. It is naturally too early to judge of their work, or of its possibilities of endurance. Unfortunately we cannot give him the unqualified praise as a statesman which he so eminently deserves as a man, a famous leader of oppressed minorities, a champion of the Jews at a time when it almost meant martyrdom to defend them, and a patriot. It is profoundly disappointing to record that President Masaryk still believes in force, maintains a very large army, and preaches preparedness despite the folly of that policy as illustrated by the World War, and that he has not protected the rights of the German minorities in his country as he should have. The forcible wiping out of all traces of German influence and culture in Prague, for example, is a melancholy example of how one who once battled nobly for the oppressed can himself turn to oppression when in power.

GEORGE HAVEN PUTNAM DEAD? It seems hardly possible, for even at eighty-five, up to three weeks ago this dean of American publishers possessed the spirit of youth and easily and fleetly dodged motors on his daily walk to his office. A Civil War soldier at seventeen, he was captured in the Shenandoah, and was one of the few men in 1930 who could testify to the hardships and cruelties of confinement at Petersburg and in Libby Prison. Inheriting with his brothers the Putnam publishing business, he held it true to his standards for more than sixty years, refusing to yield to any pressure to cheapen them. But it was as a living link between the United States and Great Britain that Major Putnam was perhaps best known. The founder of the English Speaking Union and of a professorship in American History at the University of London, he espoused the Allied cause at the outbreak of the war, throwing himself into it with all his great vitality. It is pleasant to recall his long service to good government in New York City, his unyielding fidelity to copyright legislation, to civil-service reform, to the Indian, to the cause of political independence—he was a staunch Cleveland Mugwump at a time when that seemed treason in a veteran—and to free trade.

THE LONG-AWAITED American renaissance, we are pleased to inform our readers, is here: "Art has come to the dishpan, to the washstand, to dust-mops, and to the garage. For generations, even centuries, the perfumery industry was just a matter of pleasant smells, until one shrewd French manufacturer fixed his attention upon the container—and the industry was soon off on a new start in world-wide prosperity. One artist who became famous through his brilliant black-and-white illustrations for 'Salome' is bringing beauty now to automobile tires, turnstiles, and lighting fixtures. . . . Even for commodities such as electric washing machines the manufacturers declare that artistic design is getting to be a more important factor every year. . . . Oilcloth has blossomed out into a thing of beauty. Art is on our floors." Just another of those malicious and exaggerated travesties that Mr. Sinclair Lewis puts into the mouths of his victims? No, readers, we have had Art Week in Boston, and these remarks are from the radio speech of Dr. Julius Klein, Assistant Secretary of Commerce, in solemn celebration of that event!

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The Lesson of Dollar Wheat

DOLLAR wheat has now been added to the other tribulations of President Hoover. Agricultural complaint, of course, is perennial, but agricultural distress during the past decade has been acute and widespread. The Federal Farm Board is the Administration's cure for that distress. Within eight months of its establishment wheat hits the dollar mark, and the political results are likely to be serious. The real lesson of dollar wheat, however, is hard to learn, for it involves disagreeable and unwelcome truths.

The farm cycle of the past twenty-five years has only repeated a bit of history as old as the United States. Prices of farm products have gone up, and land prices with them, while farmers thought to get rich by buying land for the rise. Then agricultural prices, and land prices with them, collapsed, and the farmers, loaded up with high-priced land, could not make a living. That is exactly what happened in spectacular fashion during and following the war. The farmer's relative disadvantage has been increased further by his inability to organize, as all sorts of industrial groups have done, to control the market. The hard fact of the business is that the farmer by the very nature of his occupation cannot successfully get special economic favors, no matter how great his political power.

For a century the farmers have tried to put their hands into the protective-tariff grab-bag. Always they have drawn out, and always they must draw out, burned fingers and nothing else. Consequently the export-debenture plan was proposed. The tariff system has for generations enhanced the prices of various manufactured goods to the real or supposed advantage of certain manufacturers and the real loss of everybody else. Discovering at last that import duties on farm products cannot raise prices in a country like ours that exports instead of importing such products, the agricultural representatives since the war have asked the rest of the country to subsidize the farmers by paying a bounty on exports so as to raise domestic prices of foodstuffs and materials against the American consumer—surely a monstrous proposal if there ever was one, though no more monstrous than the whole protective-tariff graft. The point is, however, that the farmers, even with all their political strength, did not succeed in putting through the export-debenture plan, and if they had succeeded the resulting stimulus to production would undoubtedly have robbed them of any benefit in permanent high prices.

Then came the Farm Board with its possible half-billion fund to apply big-business methods to marketing. Now cooperative marketing, in so far as it is an outgrowth of sound organization of the farming industry, is an admirable development, as the experience of Denmark has shown, but the desirable end of encouraging cooperation has been confused in many minds with the totally different end of combating grain speculation. It is believed that somehow wicked speculators are responsible for low prices, especially that they drive prices down in the fall when the farmers sell the bulk of their crops. This is simply not so. They do sometimes get rich out of price changes, but they cannot fix prices in an intensively competitive market for a world commodity like wheat or cotton. Nevertheless, the ill-directed drive against the speculator goes on, and with dollar wheat we have been treated to the edifying spectacle of a United States Senator demanding the closing of the exchanges, as though the shutting-up of the market in which the farmer's product was to be sold would raise the price he gets!

What are the facts? Wheat and cotton prices are, and in modern times always must be, world prices determined by world crops and world demand. The enormous wheat crop of 1928 resulted in an almost unprecedented carry-over into 1929. Although last year's crop was 400,000,000 bushels less than that of 1928, Europe, the great buying continent, itself raised 100,000,000 bushels more than the preceding year. Our export to Europe since the middle of 1929 has been 117,000,000 bushels less than during the corresponding period a year ago, which is more than the decrease in our wheat yield from 1928. We may, then, have a bigger carry-over this year than last. Why should not the price be low? How can it help being low? The declaration of the Farm Board in October, with prices more than thirty cents above their present level, that prices were then too low did not make them too low in the important sense of the word. That price is a right price, in the sense of a necessary price, which will move the crop. Denunciation of speculators and whole libraries of books on "ordered marketing" cannot change that disagreeable fact.

Must the farmer, then, be left to stew in his own juice? By no means, but the measures undertaken must be possible and not impossible. Improve marketing arrangements if you can, strengthen farm finance, take every possible measure of legitimate direct aid, but do not try to establish artificial prices for the farmer's product, because under our existing conditions it cannot be done. The farmer ought to be free of the unnecessary burdens under which he labors. He ought to be free of tariff graft. He ought to be free of high freight rates based on the attempt of a muddled government to insure the railroads a "fair return" on a valuation inflated by mistaken court decisions. He ought to be freed of outworn tax systems and of disastrous systems of land tenure.

Back of it all lies a more fundamental trouble. Our boasted prosperity has gone mostly to a comparative few, and the great mass of people, who make a living by working and producing rather than by planning and selling, have not found the task of earning a living appreciably eased by the events of the past ten years. The farmer's interests lie with the working class, not the trading class, and we shall get no genuine farm relief until he learns to cooperate with that working group in bringing about a better organization of industry and a more equitable distribution of its products. Such cooperation may take the form in part of common economic action, and in part of united political endeavor. If we are ever to get away from our present system of government by big business through the agency of two interchangeable parties, the farmer and the industrial worker have got to find a basis of common action. It is not wholly inconceivable that dollar wheat, for all that it means of loss to the farmer, may help forward that process.

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Poor Porto Rico

ANY one who fancies that Porto Rico is a bright and shining example of American success in administering a dependency should read Governor Theodore Roosevelt's recent message to the Porto Rican Legislature. The financial condition of the Insular government, the legislature was told, is "grave." Treasury receipts for the first six months of the present fiscal year fell $1,318,556, or 25 per cent, behind the estimated receipts on which the budget was based, and the total of perhaps $9,500,000 which the Treasurer expects to collect for the year is less by $1,420,000 than the estimate. The condition of the municipalities the Governor pronounced "desperate." Taxes are in arrears and bond issues have in some cases exceeded the legal limit. There is an Insular bonded indebtedness of $25,390,000, plus a floating indebtedness of $3,024,950. Ninety-seven municipal bond issues total $18,314,300.

Governor Roosevelt is not hopeful that much can be done to remedy the situation at once, but he makes some comprehensive recommendations for the future. With a large volume of unpaid taxes, with taxes in some cases years overdue, and with taxes "unscientifically and in some instances inequitably assessed," an immediate revision of the tax laws to meet abnormal conditions might not be suitable for normal times, and forcible collection of unpaid taxes cannot be resorted to without risking an increase of failures, unemployment, and distress. The floating indebtedness of the island should, however, be funded; the system of municipal government should be revised to get rid of useless offices and save money; and the budget system should be made more effective.

All these things are important, and if they can be carried through the Porto Ricans ought, after a time, to be able to breathe more freely. The underlying factors, as Governor Roosevelt sees them, are economic. Most of the people of Porto Rico live by agriculture, but while many small farmers have "hunger and hardship" for their "constant companions" and many have sold or deserted their farms, many large holdings are only partially developed. Governor Roosevelt proposes to pay special attention to the small farmers by spreading agricultural information and education and by encouraging the formation of cooperative marketing associations with some financial aid from the government. An additional appropriation of $3,000,000 which Congress has authorized will complete the road program, give work for two years to 8,000 persons, and eventually save $400,000 yearly in road upkeep.

Finally, Governor Roosevelt comes out frankly for industrialization. He wants factories and mills and developed hydroelectric power, a Bureau of Commerce with a branch office in New York to make the resources of the island known, and assistance in answering the inquiries of manufacturers who are to be interested in investing their capital. There may be something in this for the Porto Ricans, especially if the Governor keeps up his interest and his energy. But Latin American countries, if any, which yearn for the protection of the United States would do well to consider these results of thirty-two years of such protection in Porto Rico.

A Conspiracy

A FRIEND of ours who is not generally given to viewing with alarm has just uncovered what he regards as a serious threat to that most friendless of infant industries—authorship. Himself the author of a recent book which seems to have been more widely read than bought, he is not, perhaps, a wholly unprejudiced observer, but when his opus began persistently to appear upon the lists of the "Books Most in Demand at the Public Library" without winning a place upon the economically more significant lists of "Books Most in Demand at the Bookstores" he determined to make an investigation, and now he maintains that he, as a producer of books, is faced with certain unfavorable market conditions deliberately fostered by municipal authorities.

Books, he reports (after careful consultation with publishers and booksellers), are still occasionally purchased—chiefly for the purpose of being given away. We send them to friends about to sail for Europe and we send them to other less fortunate friends who have just had their tonsils or their appendices removed, but the dealers would shut up shop if it were not for Christmas, boats, and hospitals. Thanks to the number of circulating libraries, both free and commercial, thanks to all the facilities which they have developed for making it as easy to get a current book for a week as to buy it outright, no one buys a book simply because he wants to read it, for nowadays it is just as easy and a good deal cheaper to borrow from the branch library, the stationery store around the corner, or the friend who was lately ill. Our informant insists that certain books suffer even more than others because they are not suitable for gifts, and he calculates that the mere fact that his particular work was unadapted for convalescents lost him at least a fifth of his possible profits by completely eliminating the hospital trade.

Legislation and public opinion are, says our disgruntled informant, complacently in favor of popular education and determined that knowledge shall be free, but the mere writer is forgotten and the author, gnashing his teeth while his book is being enthusiastically borrowed on every side, is presumably supposed to live either upon fame or upon the sandwiches handed out to him at the teas given in his honor by ladies who shamelessly confess that they mean to read him as soon as his latest work is "in" at the library. We are, he continues, actually proud of these institutions which supply a whole neighborhood by means of two overworked copies of the latest "success," but we ought, he says, to regard them in another light, for though to some they may appear as the crown of our educational system, they are from the writers' point of view merely part of an organized effort to discourage the buying of books. He sees no reason why the average citizen should be encouraged to patronize the Free Library any more than he is encouraged to take his ailments to the free clinic, for both, he maintains, are eleemosynary institutions and he plans to warn Congress that one is as likely as the other to "pauperize" the citizens of the country which permits their misuse. Socialization may be, he thinks, very well, but he insists that if the municipality is going to lend his books free it ought to do the same thing with Mr. Ford's automobiles, Mr. Edison's phonographs, and Mr. Gillette's razors.

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It Seems to Heywood Broun

A GOOD play carries with it divers benefits, and among the useful by-products minted out of Marc Connelly's "The Green Pastures" is a new accession of vigor on the part of all the town's reviewers. The gentlemen of the press rose magnificently to their opportunity, and if this play of Negro life around God's throne set a new standard for the current season it did just the same for local journalism. Yet no one did quite so well as William Bolitho, the British Empire's gift to the New York *World*. Speaking of the Negro's extraordinary status in the Western world Mr. Bolitho wrote:

> They were snatched suddenly from an environment with which they had made their peace for centuries, brought across an ocean whose existence they had never imagined, taken in chains of a metal they had hardly seen before, and set down to work out their lives tilling new plants in a new land. They left behind them their very gods, their language, their songs, and were given as the sole consolation to replace them this intricate, infinitely complicated story of the Bible . . . not even in such simplified form as the older churches have brought it to, but the huge amorphous mass, riddled with all the subtly limited rationalisms which all the Protestantisms have put into it. And this Book they made their own. They digested it, as if cows might take to a ration of meat and alcohol, as if chickens succeeded in living on the tops of trees.

It is not easy, thus, to simplify the Bible but, for that matter, the reduction of Bolitho into his essential terms is no mean task. Marc Connelly, then, has scored the double triumph of acting as an agent in the clarification of both Book and Briton. I remember I was talking with a taxi driver once about the young essayist from South Africa. He made a sad hash of the name which defies phonetic reproduction and went on to say, "I read him more than any other columnist because I always know there's something there, but, boy, on plenty mornings I couldn't tell you what he was talking about."

Bolitho in his "Green Pastures" piece spoke of the Negro's adventure in history as something which "will perhaps never be paralleled until the human race is invaded and kidnapped by filibusters from another planet." But it has always seemed to me as if Bolitho himself had undergone just such an experience. The gulf set between his column and the want-ad readers of a New York morning newspaper is quite as wide as the expanse of ether which lies between the earth and Mars. William Bolitho has served his time as foreign correspondent, and yet I think he possesses less of what is traditionally known as newspaper instinct than any press man whom I know. I think the difference between his attitude and the prevalent one of city rooms is expressed in another paragraph of his column on "Green Pastures":

> It is singularly difficult to analyze what has intensely moved the mind either to enthusiasm or hatred. Yet that is a sort of duty, the only one perhaps, laid on its beneficiaries by true art. Mr. Marc Connelly's play will bear a great deal of meditation before the simple sensation of fascination is broken up into its constituents.

Now that is a mood wholly divergent from the general newspaper attitude in this country. Here we have been concerned—the exceptions are few—with recording simple facts of fascination, enthusiasm, and hatred. For instance, a typical newspaper item may be headed "Police Club Communists." You may read your morning paper from the weather forecast on the front page to the words of the founder in the current Wanamaker display ad on the back, and be no wiser as to just what a Communist is and what is the psychology of the police who club him. It is thought to be enough to say, "Levitsky, Joseph, 2984 Grand Concourse, lacerated scalp and multiple contusions."

But Mr. Levitsky's bruises are nothing whatsoever to Bolitho. He will consider them only as extremely casual stepping-stones by means of which he may get down into the constituents of the Communist's enthusiasm and the cop's hatred. In saying that such practice is alien to American journalistic tradition I am by no means contending that it is unfortunate. Indeed, I hold the opposite view. I would there were more Bolithos. A wish for bigger and better ones would be highly fantastic. It is not good that newspapers should be so wholly devoted to the business of keeping the record and so little concerned with interpretation. Over a period of time interpretation is by far the more important job, but that the dailies leave in the hands of journals of opinion which, unfortunately, seldom command sufficient circulation to make them fitting emissaries for the mass mind.

When a group of Jewish internes is hazed in a local hospital it seems to me insufficient that the papers should merely handle the surface facts of the episode without going into some speculation and study of the community's state of mind in the matter of race prejudice. There are more monsters in the depths of an ocean than ever leap out of the water, and journalism is largely a matter of tabulating the little hops of flying fish and ignoring the whales.

But though Bolitho at his best has written the most brilliant pieces it has ever been my privilege to see in any newspaper he does possess certain faults in technique. All baseball fans have seen at one time or another the eager shortstop who covered wide territory and yet failed his team upon occasion through his effort to throw the ball a little before it reached his hands. I have known Bolitho to indulge his passion for analysis before he had quite allowed the fact itself to enter into his mind. Or if it was in the mind of the writer it had not yet penetrated the consciousness of the reader. Before "the simple sensation of fascination is broken up into its constituents" some little time must be spent in observing and noting down the outward manifestations of the thing. Mr. Levitsky's multiple contusions should be counted and even thumbed over before the exploration into Mr. Levitsky's soul commences. One should not attempt to make straw without bricks.

But the intention of this article is bouquetial. As one columnist to another I bow low three times, no mean feat for me, and tap my forehead on the floor.

HEYWOOD BROUN

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Power Control Breaks Down

By LAURENCE TODD

F. E. BONNER, executive secretary of the Federal Power Commission, testifying on February 20 before the Senate Committee on Interstate Commerce, complained that "persecution" of the electric-utility corporations had endangered the progress of hydroelectric development in this country.

Congress began some three years ago to wonder why power generated by privately owned American companies on the American side of Niagara Falls is sold to American consumers at double the prices charged to Canadian consumers in Ontario, who are served by a government-owned and government-operated hydroelectric system. In March, 1927, as the session of the Sixty-ninth Congress was ending, Senator Walsh of Montana quietly introduced a resolution providing that the Senate investigate the financial and propaganda aspects of privately owned public utilities. Senator Walsh hoped that his resolution would slip through unnoticed in the final rush. Instead, he barely got it reported out of the Interstate Commerce Committee to which it had been referred; and when finally, by one vote, the resolution was reported to the Senate, it received what its enemies regarded as a death blow: the investigation it embodied was put into the hands of the supposedly innocuous Federal Trade Commission. But the Federal Trade Commission assigned Judge McCulloch to conduct the utilities investigation. Judge Healy, new chief counsel for the commission, began to examine witnesses about the propaganda machinery set up in more than thirty States by the Power Trust. The country was amazed to learn that its daily and periodical press, its public schools, its churches and Boy Scouts and other civic organizations had been for years absorbing propaganda which was designed by the National Electric Light Association and its allies to prejudice the public against any step toward public ownership. For two years the Federal Trade Commission has steadily pursued its inquiries. It has now entered upon the financial phase of the probe; and on February 24, economists who have been examining the financial structure of power companies since the investigation was ordered began to disclose their findings before the commission, disclosures which Mr. Bonner, presumably protector of the public against the Power Trust, characterized as "irresponsible newspaper statements" and "persecution" of electric-utility corporations.

The power investigation now going on before the Senate Interstate Commerce Committee has for its immediate object a plan for reorganizing the Federal Power Commission on a scale commensurate with its great responsibility under the Federal Water Power Act. That act set up a commission composed of the Secretaries of War, Agriculture, and the Interior, with an executive secretary and a small staff of accountants and counsel, to administer the leasing, for periods of not more than fifty years, of the power sites remaining in federal control. These sites are on navigable streams and their tributaries, on public lands, and in the national forests.

The administration of the act as described in testimony before the Interstate Commerce Committee of the Senate led Senator Couzens, the chairman, to declare that "conditions in the commission have become so intolerable that it presents one of the rottenest exhibitions of government I have ever heard of." The disclosures which led up to this declaration began with the publication in August, 1929, of an anonymous memorandum which purported to reflect the desires of power executives to kill off the accounting system installed by Chief Accountant King of the commission and expressed the hope that a suitable successor might be chosen to O. C. Merrill, secretary to the commission since its establishment in 1920. When this secret document came to light, with its suggestion that the quotations for electric-utility stocks would be injured by examination of padded investment accounts, Solicitor Charles Russell, recently brought over from the legal staff of the Interstate Commerce Commission, joined Accountant King in defending the right of the public to have the water-power act enforced.

Russell and King have recently told the story of the commission before the Committee on Interstate Commerce. They presented records showing that no fundamental question as to federal control of federal power resources had ever been passed upon by the commission. They showed that in nine years an average of only five and one-half hours a year had been devoted by the three Cabinet members to the work of this commission. This precious time had been devoted to granting permits or extensions, or to other routine work. Regulation of rates had never even been approached.

Then King brought out a report made to Congress in January, 1928, which had been withdrawn by the commission, deleted to the extent of twelve pages, and then resubmitted in its amended form. Those twelve pages consisted of a series of illustrations of alleged fraudulent or padded accounting.

The first was that of the Niagara Falls Power Company, one of the concerns named by Bonner as victims of persecution. This company, according to the statement which the commission suppressed, had refused to give access to some of its records to the commission's accountants. But their examination did disclose that "considerable property which had been abandoned and demolished was still carried in whole or in part in the plant-investment account; that many large amounts in connection with new construction appeared to have been erroneously charged to property investment; and that many millions of dollars carried in the plant investment account did not represent actual investment either by the company or its predecessors."

Then followed an analysis of the company's claim for valuation on which consumers must pay dividends through the rates paid for electricity. Of $77,671,451 claimed by the company, $31,190,974 was found to represent lands, structures, and equipment. There was an item of "intangible property" amounting to $5,762,143, and one of "overhead costs" amounting to $8,718,334, while "water rights" were valued at $32,000,000. These water rights came from the federal government. Then there was a claim of $27,465,125 for "new construction," charged in with the rest,

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although this item did not belong to the original investment.

Another case deleted from the report was that of the Clarion River Power Company of Pennsylvania, promoted by H. D. Walbridge and Company, New York bankers. Book costs of this development were $11,032,816.57. The commission's accountants found that the expenditures on actual construction work were $4,360,000, while "more than $6,000,000 of alleged cost is represented merely by entries on the books and is unsupported by evidence of expenditure or cost." The Walbridge firm refused to permit access to original records. The Clarion River Power Company is now controlled by the Associated Gas and Electric Company. This report in its original form, while still confidential to the press, fell into the hands of an editor of the McGraw-Hill publications, who notified the Niagara Falls Power Company of its damaging contents. Colonel Kelly, vice-president of the company and former chief engineer for the Federal Power Commission, came immediately to Washington urging Secretary Merrill and then the members of the commission to withdraw it. Merrill refused to approve its suppression, but Secretaries Davis, Work, and Jardine recalled it from Congress and deleted the evidence of what the Niagara Falls Power Company was doing.

Within a year after the failure of this attempt to disclose padded cost accounting by electric utilities, Merrill decided to resign, though his salary had just been raised from $7,500 to $8,000 a year. He had tried for nearly nine years, without success, to get the White House and Congress to provide the commission with adequate personnel to check up the claims of applicants as to the investment they made before getting sites, and thereby check the inflation of capital accounts. He has testified that in 1923-24 there was created a finance committee which raised, chiefly from among the big power companies that were among the applicants for federal power sites, a fund of $25,000 to send an American delegation to a world power conference in London. He was among the delegates. While he remained on the government pay roll as executive secretary, he used most of the $7,000 that was left in this fund to go to Europe to other conferences in succeeding years. Secretary of Commerce Hoover was honorary chairman of the American Committee of the World Power Congress, and knew the source of these funds, Merrill has testified. Good fairies in the form of Paul Clapp, of the National Electric Light Association, Henry J. Pierce, of the legal staff of Electric Bond and Share, and a representative of Harris, Forbes, and Company had raised the original fund for this American Committee of the World Power Congress. Clapp now guaranteed to Merrill for five years a $15,000 salary as chairman of that organization. The National Electric Light Association undertook to distribute the load among the other leaders of the power industry, including Electric Bond and Share and the Guaranty Trust Company.

When Merrill left his government post, he wrote a letter recommending F. E. Bonner as his successor. Secretary Wilbur went for advice concerning Bonner to an executive of the Pacific Gas and Electric Company, who was also a trustee of Stanford University and a classmate of President Hoover, and Bonner was duly appointed.

Merrill had mildly protested because he was not given facilities to do his duty. Bonner promptly announced that no increase in the accounting or legal staff of the commission was needed. Secretary Wilbur echoed this opinion, although the previous commission, in the Coolidge administration, had urged upon Congress the dire need of more help in digging the truth from the claims of the power companies seeking federal favors. Bonner has declared that Merrill was to blame for delay, in the past nine years, in auditing the power applicants' investment claims. Merrill in turn has blamed the Director of the Budget Bureau, General Lord, and Congress, and has indorsed King's assertion that the commission should have its own staff of accountants and counsel and no longer depend upon personnel drawn from the Departments of War, Agriculture, and the Interior.

Here must be quoted the final paragraphs from the anonymous memorandum of last summer:

> The foregoing statement shows how critical is the situation which now results from an increased appropriation by Congress which is to provide for an increase in the personnel, and consequent activity, of the accounting staff of the commission. We have made representations to the Water Power Development Committee of the United States Chamber of Commerce that this accounting work could be better done by the Departments of War, Interior, and Agriculture than by the commission's staff directly. If this committee is successful in presenting this argument to the secretaries who form the commission, and further direct enlargement of the accounting staff is prevented, it is believed that these departments will not have men specially trained for this work. At least, they will be removed from the direct supervision of Mr. King.
>
> There is another phase of the present situation which we are watching carefully. It is rumored that Mr. Merrill may be persuaded to accept some other more lucrative and less trying position. The new Secretary-Commissioner may be persuaded to appoint as his successor some engineer who may quite naturally be sympathetic toward the development of the accounting force and its activity as previously outlined. . . . It is anticipated that the agencies and forces opposed to our industry in national legislation will not have their attention directed to this matter and it is hoped that discreet representations can be made to the new Secretary-Commissioner.

On November 16, 1929, Wilbur approved a recommendation by Bonner that the three departments be drawn upon for personnel to do accounting work, and that "the pre-license cost statements of applicants for licenses and the construction-cost statements of licensees be referred as far as practicable to the Departments of War, Interior, or Agriculture for examination and recommendation prior to review by the accounting officer of the commission."

Bonner at one time tried in vain, by bringing Solicitor Russell into private conference with M. O. Leighton, representative of the Electric Bond and Share Company, to persuade Russell that Accountant King was obstructing unduly the granting of power sites to Leighton's clients. Conflict in the commission staff led to deadlock, Bonner and Wilbur preventing the securing of further funds with which to bring the disputed investment accounts to decision, and King and Russell refusing to approve the unaudited claims. For months Bonner referred no legal problems to Solicitor Russell and deflected accounting work from King wherever this could be done. Now a demand has been made in the Senate that Bonner resign, while Administration suggestions that King and Russell be likewise dismissed have been met by Senator Norris's declaration that they should be promoted as faithful servants of the public.

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The Christian Science Censor
IV. The Siege of Fort Scribner*

By HENRY RAYMOND MUSSEY

THE effort of the directors of the Mother Church to suppress Edwin Franden Dakin's "Mrs. Eddy: The Biography of a Virginal Mind," published last summer by Charles Scribner's Sons, and the methods employed in that effort have fortunately received an unusual amount of publicity. The entire incident is so revealing, however, that it cannot be omitted in any account of the church censorship, and there are certain aspects of it that have not hitherto received due attention. I attempt no criticism or appraisal of Dakin's work further than a reminder, to those of my readers who share my own distaste for the "modern" method in psychology and biography, that the book is a careful, thoroughly documented study, which was greeted by the reviewers almost without exception as one of the outstanding biographies of the year.

The book was announced last April for publication in the early fall, and the publishers put into the hands of each of twenty members of their sales organization a confidential statement of "selling points" on the work. In some unexplained way this memorandum came into the possession of Mr. Orwell Bradley Towne, Publication Committee for New York, and the executives of the firm, much to their surprise, shortly received a call from him, memorandum in hand. Mr. Towne made a strong protest against the publication of the book on the ground that the memorandum proved the book to be "false" and "unworthy." He remarked the danger of offending several million people, and suggested that the manuscript be submitted to the Committee on Publication for checking as to the reliability of its sources and the accuracy of its data. Just how complete and accurate information and fair criticism Mr. Dakin would have received from that source I leave my readers to judge in the light of the facts I have given concerning the treatment of other lives of Mrs. Eddy. Mr. Towne was politely but firmly informed that Scribner's does not submit books to censorship by interested parties before publication. His little reconnaissance in force had disclosed the existence of a fort that apparently did not intend to haul down its flag at the first sign of danger.

It was accordingly decided to try diplomacy next. No use to fight if things can be arranged pleasantly among gentlemen. It was discovered that Albert Lombard, Committee on Publication for Southern California, was an old Harvard roommate of Henry H. Saylor, editor of *Architecture,* published by Scribner's. On July 3, Mr. Saylor received a letter from his old friend reminding him of Lombard's old-time interest in Christian Science and consequent concern over the Dakin book, which Lombard understood to be inaccurate, inadequate, unfair, and quite unworthy the esteemed name of Scribner. So Lombard suggested: "If you are in a position to discuss this subject with the proper person so that it will receive judicious consideration, the best interests of both of us may be served." It was all very pleasant, gentlemanly, and friendly, as became one old friend to another, and as became a proper diplomat. The letter was passed on to "the proper person" in the Scribner organization, but once more nothing happened except that preparations for publication went steadily forward. The committee had lost this little diplomatic skirmish, too. There seemed to be nothing to do but bring up the siege-guns and prepare for action with the heavy artillery if necessary.

Exactly what went on in the offices of the publication committee in Boston during the hot days of last summer it is impossible to say, but one can make a fairly safe guess from what has occurred since. Evidently the campaign plans were laid there and we have concrete evidence that certain directions went out from that office to the State committees as to how the campaign was to be carried on. The Dakin book was published August 16 and was in the hands of booksellers all over the country by the beginning of September. Immediately the publishers began to be deluged with letters of protest from Christian Scientists and with perturbed inquiries from booksellers who suddenly found themselves under hot fire.

The letters from Christian Scientists may be divided into two groups, those that threaten boycott and those that do not. An occasional letter suggests that the writer has looked into the book, but the vast majority were evidently written, under direction or suggestion, by persons whose knowledge of the book was obtained at second hand. I quote a few representative examples:

New York, September 19

You have recently published a book about Mrs. Eddy which I understand is disrespectful of her character and accomplishments. . . . As far as I know there is no premeditated attempt on the part of the organization to cause letters to be written to your good selves but doubtlessly you will have received many letters in addition to this one.

North Cohasset, Mass., September 5

I am writing to protest against the publishing by Charles Scribner's Sons of the spurious life of Mrs. Eddy.

Boston, August 28

A great protest goes up from true Christian Scientists everywhere that at this date such a wholly false and malicious book should be published by your respected house.

Louisville, Ky., December 2

I have just learned of the book, "Mrs. Eddy, the Biography of a Virginal Mind," by Edwin Franden Dakin, which has been published by your firm. . . . I feel impelled to lift my voice in protest against the publication and circulation of this book which has been described as "biased and offensive, avoiding any good word for Mrs.

*This is the last of a series of four articles.—EDITOR THE NATION.

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Eddy and misrepresenting her wherever possible." . . . With sincere hope that this book, which is so objectionable to Christian Scientists, may be speedily suppressed . . .

I turn with pain to the boycotting letters, for the publication committees often point out that their religion prohibits them from any attempt at injury to publishers, and I regret to see them so singularly unsuccessful in restraining the misdirected zeal of their erring followers. Here is one that is quick on the trigger:

New York, August 30

After reading the review of a book that you have just published called "Mrs. Eddy: The Biography of a Virginal Mind," by E. F. Dakin, I wish to inform you that I, for one, will never patronize your shop again and if there is any way that I can keep others from buying books at your store I will endeavor to do so.

In different vein:

Toronto, November 5

I trust you will realize that I am writing this in a very friendly way, but I would also point out that I could not purchase books from a house publishing such objectionable matter and, as you doubtless realize, there will be many, many more purchasers of books who will feel as I do.

On a post card, only this:

New York, December 13

Dear old Friends—Sorry I cannot buy from you now. Earnestly.

From an ignorant anonymous Scientist to the author:

Bridgeport, Conn., August 26

You must want to make a living off the dead, and at that a woman, that now cannot defend herself. No one would do such a thing but a *Coward* in the sight of God. . . . To all C. Scientists you are to them a Coward and lower than a Worm. The book and publisher will be boycott by all Christian Scientists.

Letters from individuals suggesting or threatening boycott could be multiplied indefinitely; the publication committees virtuously disclaim them, but occasionally even a publication committee apparently slips. By some error the publishers received official letters of protest (all but two written within two weeks of September 16) from no less than nine churches, all of them, by a curious coincidence, in St. Louis or Kansas City. The spirit of truth seems to have prevailed mightily and all at once in this geographic area. The following letter is signed by the clerk of the Third Church of Kansas City:

Kansas City, September 16

[The Dakin book] . . . is obnoxious to all Christian Scientists and misleading to the general public.

. . . The Church Manual . . . governs every Branch Church . . . and we are one of those branches. A by-law . . . reads as follows: "A member of this church shall not patronize a publishing house or bookstore that has for sale obnoxious books."

We are calling your attention to this, feeling that if you understood the circumstances you would not want to be instrumental in putting out a book which was not true and might be detrimental to you.

Even more directly to the point was the communication of the Sixth Church of the same city:

Kansas City, September 17

At a meeting of our executive board . . . motion prevailed that a letter be written . . . protesting that [the Dakin book] is obnoxious according to the understanding of Christian Scientists, and that in conformity with our Church Manual we will have to desist from patronizing your company unless the book be removed from publication.

From these business-like communications one turns to one signed for the trustees by the clerk of the Fifth Church in St. Louis. It contains no mention of by-laws, but after stating that the Dakin book "is in every respect objectionable to our membership" ends briefly thus: "We trust that the Spirit of the 'Golden Rule' will prompt you to give our protest consideration."

For months the publishers were covered with a barrage of protests such as have been indicated, the whole campaign evidently having been most carefully organized and directed. While the main fortress was thus being beleaguered, every outlying post from Burlington, Vermont, to Honolulu was likewise being subjected to vigorous attack, always with the same weapons and essentially the same strategy. The skilful national organization and the great success (probably exaggerated, however) of the campaign are indicated in the following extract from a letter of Richard C. Shoup, Publication Committee for Georgia, published in the Macon *Telegraph* of December 20:

These protests have been entered so effectively that according to Mr. Charles [*sic*] Scribner, senior member of Scribner and Sons, the book has been removed from sale in four-fifths of the bookstores of the United States. To achieve this result, it was not necessary to use threats, in fact very definite instructions were issued by the manager of the committees on publication in Boston, Massachusetts, that no threat was to be used. We found that the booksellers are as a whole reasonable and fair-minded men and they are not interested in assisting the publishers to distribute a malicious, untruthful book, objectionable (because of its misrepresentations) to many of their fellow-citizens.

I call special attention to the "very definite instructions" that went out from the manager of the committees on publication, and express my regret at the mention of only one feature of those instructions. I remind my readers of the sample letters to the publishers already quoted and raise the question how church members, under the obnoxious-book rule, could call attention of booksellers to the obnoxiousness of the work without threatening a boycott. Certainly the bewildered booksellers somewhere got the impression that they were being threatened with dire things. I have space for only a handful of their letters to the publishers:

Palo Alto, Cal., October 8

I have been forced by the Christian Scientists here to put copies I have of "Mrs. Eddy" under the table and to refrain from buying any more.

Los Angeles, August 27

The local chairman for the Christian Science Committee on Publications has just been here. Apparently every effort is going to be made to suppress "Mrs. Eddy"—up to and including intimidation. [From a later letter] The Christian Scientists are giving us no rest. "Old Charge Customers" write in and they bedevil us daily.

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Detroit, November 23

Due to violent protest by the Science Church in our City and boycott on our store by these good people, we have been forced to withdraw the sale of your book "Mrs. Eddy" from our store.

Utica, N. Y., October 22

A good friend of mine who is a prominent Scientist advises me not to stock the book, stating that it was extremely detrimental to Christian Science, and that if we offered the book for sale our store would be shunned by all local Scientists.

Without setting forth more of the abundant available evidence, I summarize briefly my own conclusions. The church authorities, unable to bring about the withdrawal or modification of Dakin's work, set in motion the machinery I have earlier described, with the deliberate purpose of preventing the sale of the book as far as possible. The campaign constituted in its essence, whatever it was in name, a nation-wide boycott of the publishers and of all booksellers who did not yield to the request that the book be withdrawn from sale. The actual carrying out of the measures was in the hands of the State and local publication committees and individual members of the church, but complete responsibility for the campaign as a whole rests on the manager of the publication committees and on the Board of Directors who appointed him; for under the Manual they have the power to control his official actions. No disclaimer on their part can free them of such responsibility. The action which has received such wide publicity in this case is thoroughly consistent with everything that I have been able to learn of the methods and ideas of the directors, the committees on publication, and great numbers of individual members of the church acting under their direction and suggestion in many other cases that have not had much public attention during the past quarter-century. In many cases their action has resulted in virtually entire suppression. In the present instance the Scribner flag still floats defiantly. A new popular edition of the Dakin book, containing important additional matter, including sensational extracts from Calvin Frye's diaries, has just come from the press.

With this case I bring my record to a close. I have tried to set down honestly and fairly, and as adequately as possible within my space limits, the relevant facts concerning this remarkable publicity organization. My wish has been not to attack any individual or group or to impugn their motives, and above all not to attack the Christian Science religion or the faith of its adherents. I have wished to attack, by the simple statement of facts, the operation of a powerful and dangerous publicity machine absolutely controlled by the central authorities of the Christian Science church and used to an end that I believe dangerous to orderly progress, namely, the suppression of truth. If the general public, and notably our newspapers and publishers, can be put on notice regarding its operation, and if the attention of the honest and thoughtful Christian Scientists of the country can be drawn to the abuse of power within the church, with a view to ultimate correction of such abuse, my end will have been achieved.

The Hoover Hippodrome

By PAUL Y. ANDERSON

Washington, March 1

NO amount of glossing or suppression can conceal the fact that at last the Hoover Administration is in serious difficulty. The number and gravity of its troubles may not be sufficient at this time to warrant free use of the phrase, "One-Term Herbert," recently attributed to an Old Guard cynic, but they are enough to inspire genuine apprehension among the President's friends, and to explain some of the panicky maneuvers recently executed at the White House. Chief among the causes of worry are the following: (1) the business depression and attendant unemployment; (2) loss of party unity and control in Congress and the multitude of ensuing complications; (3) the situation created by the Farm Board's efforts to interpret and apply the agricultural marketing act; (4) multiplying signs of scandal in connection with electric-power developments. Moreover, the Administration now faces the possibility of failure or disappointing compromise at the naval conference, with the added knowledge that any measurable success would alienate some of its most powerful supporters.

* * * * *

IF any President caused the business depression, it was Coolidge. Nevertheless, Hoover will receive the blame, precisely as he would have received the equally undeserved credit if the condition had been reversed. He is clearly responsible for staging a ballyhoo to conceal the facts, instead of making an earnest effort to ascertain them and apprehend their causes. Coolidge's opponents learned that there was no answer to prosperity, and Hoover's supporters may learn that there is no explanation of adversity. Sometimes a poor rule works both ways. As for Hoover's relations with Congress, they have gone steadily from bad to worse until it is difficult to say in what quarter dissatisfaction is most intense. Certainly as much resentment exists between the President and the Republican leaders as exists between either of them and the Progressive-Democratic opposition. From the beginning Hoover's technique in dealing with Congress has been singularly simple and ineffectual. First he threatens; then he runs. So often have Old Guard leaders gone forth to fight behind the President, and suddenly found themselves fighting alone, that they hesitate to follow him anywhere. Even Jim Watson has sufficient pride to feel the humiliation when he concludes a long and passionate defense of a White House statement, and sits down to find that a supplemental statement has rendered his defense ridiculous. That is what happened this week.

* * * * *

THE episode was a perfect illustration of three Hoover characteristics that have involved their possessor in plenty of grief and embarrassment, namely: his habit of re-

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sorting to circus stunts to divert attention from disagreeable situations; a curious lack of candor in selecting and staging his material; and a precipitate tendency to disavow and abandon it in the face of hostile reaction. Thus, at the conclusion of a White House breakfast he made public a list of appropriation bills pending before Congress, with the warning that passage of all these bills would necessitate a drastic increase in taxes. The impression to be conveyed was that of a wise and frugal President demanding economy of an extravagant Congress. A more transparent piece of hippodroming cannot be imagined. Members of Congress are constantly introducing appropriation bills without the slightest hope or intent of having them passed, and there has seldom been a time in recent years when such a list could not have been compiled. Any such list would have been equally long and equally meaningless. The Senate's reaction was as prompt as it was inevitable, and on Senator Watson, as the Republican floor leader, fell the unhappy duty of justifying the White House strictures on Congressional extravagance. Hardly had he concluded when he was handed a supplemental statement from that source explaining that the President had not meant his admonitions for Congress at all, but for those individuals and organizations on the outside who were pressing Congress for appropriations outside the budget. I am told that Jim mopped his massive brow and fervently inquired: "How in hell are you going to stand behind a man who has St. Vitus dance?" The public may be excused for experiencing a similar dizziness when it hears one group of trusted Hoover spokesmen denouncing the Senate coalitionists for obstructing and mutilating "the Administration tariff bill," while another equally trusted group carefully explains that the coalition is writing exactly the sort of tariff bill that the President desires.

* * * * *

THE affairs of the Farm Board have reached a critical stage. It is obvious that Chairman Legge is determined to adopt whatever measures he considers necessary to carry out his original aim of bringing the farmers into cooperatives, and bringing the cooperatives into the marketing organization sponsored and financed by the board, and that he is prepared to conduct ferocious reprisals against any and all who oppose his program. Is the board charged with price-fixing? Well, I can only say that those who counted on anything else must either have been ignorant of the purpose of the farm act, or they had an abiding faith in the inability or unwillingness of the board to administer it, for price-fixing always was the ultimate object. Either Chairman Legge will put the grain trade out of business, or the grain trade will put him out of business. The outcome is up to Mr. Hoover. My money is on Mr. Legge as long as he lasts, but I am not certain how long he will last.

* * * * *

THE Senate committee investigating lobbying finally has unearthed a long-suspected scandal in connection with Muscle Shoals. When such corporations as the American Cyanamid Company and the Alabama Power Company set out to get possession of a government property valued at more than $100,000,000, scandal is always suspected although it is not always disclosed. The disclosures in this case involve Messrs. Coolidge and Hoover to a degree that would be sensational in any country except this case-hardened republic. Even here they very possibly will suffice to insure passage of the Norris bill for government operation of the plant. Under the circumstances it will be somewhat embarrassing for Mr. Hoover to emulate his predecessor by vetoing the bill. The facts are fairly simple. The Cyanamid company, in partnership with the Union Carbide Company, wanted the property. So did the Alabama Power Company, a child of Electric Bond and Share. Both were fearful of government operation, and the Alabama Power was fearful that if the Cyanamid company got the plant surplus power might be sold in competition with its own service. So they fought. By devices which remain shrouded in mystery, Cyanamid enlisted the support of the American Farm Bureau Federation and its legislative agent, Chester H. Gray. Agents ostensibly representing the federation, but actually on the Cyanamid pay roll, went about the country lining up farm organizations in support of the Cyanamid bid. It was not long until wiser heads perceived the danger in this conflict. They saw that if Cyanamid and Alabama Power continued to fight for this government property, neither of them might get it—the government might keep it and operate it for the benefit of the public. Accordingly, Gray testified, President Coolidge directed him to see officials of the Cyanamid company and ask them to arrive at some amicable agreement with the power interests. At that time Mr. Hoover was Secretary of Commerce. In a purported confidential memorandum signed by Claudius Huston, now Republican national chairman, and addressed to J. W. Worthington, leader of the fight against government operation, it was stated that "you and I, in the fall of 1925, did our utmost to bring the power and chemical groups together, . . . and Mr. Hoover attempted to do so later, and Mr. Hoover even undertook to bring these interests together through Owen D. Young, and failed."

* * * * *

THAT was the evidence before the committee. Observe how it was reported by the Associated Press:

> Testimony that President Hoover, while Secretary of Commerce, had attempted to aid in solving the long-standing problem of Muscle Shoals by an effort to reconcile the divergent views of the power and chemical groups was heard today before the Senate lobby committee.

Was this an effort to obscure the significance of a spectacular news development or is it to be explained on routine grounds? Subsequently, according to the evidence, it was suggested that if the power and chemical interests should succeed in reaching an agreement for a peaceable division of the spoils, they should do it in a manner that would enable them to deny its existence. They now deny that any agreement was reached, although the competition for Muscle Shoals seems to have lessened appreciably!

The Wintry Mind

By WITTER BYNNER

Winter uncovers distances, I find;
And so the cold and so the wintry mind
Takes leaves away, till there remains behind
A wide cold world, and so the heart grows blind
To the earth's green motions lying warm below
Field upon field, field upon field, of snow.

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The Inventor Enters Heaven

By JAMES RORTY

FOR some years the deaf old man had contemplated his departure from the terrestrial scene without reluctance, without fear, but with a certain characteristic curiosity. Perhaps for that reason his translated self was moved to linger briefly, before beginning its celestial journey, to assist at the unprecedented tribute with which America honored the memory of her greatest inventor.

It had been rather imaginatively conceived, after the manner of the English celebration of Armistice Day. Promptly at half-past eight on the evening of the funeral, the main switches of the power stations clicked in unison, and in darkness America mourned her loss. Light and sound and motion were all pinched out in this sudden pause. The radio, too, was silent—had not the great inventor anticipated this whole development decades ago?

All over America millions of awed people sat in the darkened motion-picture houses, facing screens which had suddenly gone blank; minds turned inward upon the mind's blank curtain; dismayed, and groping uncertainly for the rusty tools of image-making; struggling painfully in vacuum, as the fetus struggles in the womb; hating birth and begging for the return of the anaesthetic flicker of false love, false birth, false death.

Yet here and there something stirred in that darkness. A boy's hand felt for the breast of his girl, who covered his hand with hers. Together they rose and crept out into the wider darkness, the more entranced silence, of Broadway. All traffic had stopped; the extinguished bulbs which festooned the façades of the buildings drooped like paper garlands, withered by the sudden frost of silence and darkness. Broadway was like an abandoned motion-picture set, unreal beneath the casual silver of the brightened moon.

Suddenly the lights snapped on. The ten-minute tribute of darkness and silence was over, and now the ether vibrated with the earth-girdling bellow of the greatest radio hook-up in history. The eulogistic phrases were familiar—too familiar; so was the toneless voice of an ex-President of the United States for whom the great inventor remembered voting. But he could *hear* now, since death had stripped him of his protective infirmity. Muttering sadly to himself, the old man pressed his fingers to his ears.

* * * * *

From everlasting unto everlasting stretched the glassy sea. Beside it rose the ramparts of the Kingdom, tower on tower, praising the Most High in soaring splendors of jade and chrysoprase. Like the choiring meadow larks of a California spring, like a paean of light made vocal, came the celestial antiphony: "Alleluia! Alleluia! Allelu-u-u-ia!" All this was as it should be, reflected the inventor. Yet it did not seem quite right that the gate of the heavenly mansions should look a little like the entrance of the New York post office, even though much vaster and more luminous. And the inscription over the portico was different. It was difficult to read—something about children.

Reading this, the great inventor felt himself very old, and a little hesitant. The ceaseless iteration of the alleluiaing angels struck him, too, as a little fatuous. He could see them now, hundreds of them, stationed at intervals along the heavenly ramparts. There was one close by the gate, a magnificent winged creature, clothed only in light so that the inventor could not help observing that the seraph was appropriately sexless. Soon, he reflected, it would be this one's turn, and even as he watched—

"Allelu—"

"Shut up!"

The voice which had so rudely interrupted the celestial antiphony was anything but seraphic. Equally incongruous was the appearance of the bearded ancient who had suddenly appeared through a side gate, hurriedly thrusting his arms through a monk's cassock.

"Come right in. You're expected."

This, then, would be St. Peter. Smiling diffidently, the inventor mounted the steps while he gathered his thoughts together for the speech which would undoubtedly be expected of him. Also, he reflected with a throb of apprehension, there would be those terrible reporters. Their questions always fell into two categories: things that God Himself couldn't answer, and things that didn't matter. It was almost as if America hadn't manifested a bit of adult curiosity in the last decade. The worst of it was that a coerced answer to a foolish question is always equally foolish. For years he had been obliged to celebrate his birthday by writing himself down a conceited, priggish child. And he wasn't that. Damned if he was!

"On the contrary, you're damned if you're not."

"I beg pardon? You know I'm a little deaf."

"I beg *your* pardon. You know quite well that in your present state you are nothing of the sort. Neither am I. Nor am I deaf to the thoughts which you have just been thinking. I must say that you have changed greatly since we received our last report of you. As you see, I have had the gates opened, but perhaps it would be as well for us to wait and talk a bit before we go in."

Silently, before the dazzled eyes of the inventor, the gates of pearl rolled back, disclosing a limitless vista of towers and castles. Something in the pyramidal, stepped-back style of the heavenly architecture struck the inventor as familiar. The resemblance was intensified by the din of riveters and the hiss of welding machines that surged out through the heavenly gates. Familiar, too, were the banners swung high above the streets of gold and bearing the inscription: "Forward, Heaven. Business Is Good. Keep It Good."

"Heaven seems very populous," remarked the inventor mildly.

"Frightful! Frightful! A while back we had a slight recession. Some of your people were caught long on bliss and threatened to grow up. But now they're coming again faster than ever. And you can't turn 'em away. That's the rule, you know. Of such is the kingdom of heaven." The guardian saint pointed at the inscription over the portico.

"But I didn't realize that earth had produced so many good people!"

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"Good? What's good? All that's beside the point. The twentieth century will probably go down as the most exquisitely childlike period in human history. That last children's crusade your fellow-countryman Wilson was so keen about—we were simply swamped! Haven't caught up yet. A new mob of children at the gates every day. They seem to come faster and faster."

"But how about hell?"

"Hell! There's a deserted village for you. They haven't had a baker's dozen in the last ten years. You ought to see it."

The inventor's mind leaped to a new vista. Even in the presence of eternal bliss the habit of curiosity is not easily suppressed.

"Do you know," he started, "if you wouldn't mind—"

But the saint gestured for silence. The din of the riveters had ceased. In the profound silence of eternity the inventor could hear the soft fall of pin feathers upon the streets of gold, dropped by the processions of the saved moving back and forth over the celestial causeways. Suddenly a burst of choral music shook the ramparts.

"That's the Celestial Rotary Chorus," explained Saint Peter. "They're rehearsing their welcoming song for you. Listen!"

The chorus swelled in volume until the words were clearly distinguishable. It was the song which George M. Cohan had composed for the celebration of Light's Golden Jubilee, the fiftieth anniversary of his greatest invention:

He is
A Wiz.

The inventor remembered it only too well, and blushed.

"The voices seem—well, perhaps a little light."

"Of course," answered the saint. "That's the Rotarians. Boy sopranos. Always have been and always will be. Time without end. God knows I've heard enough of them."

The accent of bitterness in the saint's voice was unmistakable. Seeing the surprise in the inventor's expression, he shrugged his shoulders. "You're thinking that heaven is perfect? Well, it is. Perfect for children. But I'm not in it. I'm the gate-keeper. It's your heaven, not mine. Come along, the Rotarians are waiting for you—Hey! Wait, where are you going?" For the old inventor had spread the tail of his frock coat like a sail and was in full flight toward the abyss of night.

"Do you mean to say," shouted the saint as he caught up with him, "that you actually don't *want* to enter heaven?"

The inventor turned and stared at him. "I'll see you in hell first," he stated succinctly.

Throwing back his head, the guardian of the gate laughed long and loud. "See me in hell first, eh? That *is* an idea. Wish I might. No such luck for me. And what, by the way, makes you think that *you'll* get in? Hell is very exclusive. For adults only, you know."

"So I gathered," replied the inventor with dignity. Then, as the memory of his earthly frustrations gathered force: "Do you suppose I enjoyed seeing my life-work made trivial and ridiculous? I was an inventor—it was my passion to use the tools of science for the service of mankind. I gave the world light—good light, cheap light. Is it my fault if they used it to outrage the beauty and peace of the night—to make a cheap bazaar out of every street and avenue, selling one another cigarettes and chewing gum at the rate of a million candle-power a minute? I gave them the phonograph, so that every man, woman, and child might know the glory of great music and great speech; so that the great singer, the great instrumentalist, might have all future generations of men for his audience. So I thought and dreamed. Yet today I am afraid there is less music in the heart and mind of the common man than ever before in history. I gave them the motion picture. At first I thought it was a toy. Then, too late, I saw that it was the medium of a new art. For by that time it had become merely a new racket for the pants-makers, and millions of minds were being trivialized and anaesthetized by that endless flicker of falseness and venality. How much of my work was actually applied to the service of a sane humanity? How much of it was cheapened and perverted by the greed of men, the mechanical greed of money to make more money? My work was honest work. I never cared for money—never thought about it. You imply that my work helped to fill that vulgar adolescent heaven of yours. I deny it. At any rate, it's your heaven, not mine. I want none of it."

The guardian of the gate had listened to this outburst with growing admiration. "Do you know," he remarked, "I think perhaps you have a chance. Be sure to tell all this to Lucifer the first thing. You understand the basis of the divine categories, don't you? Heaven is for children and nose-followers, people who follow their noses like the animals, only not so well; people who praise God because they have never grown up enough to respect and praise themselves. Hell, on the other hand, is for adults and hell-raisers; people who praise and serve man from everlasting unto everlasting; who follow Lucifer in the revolt that one day will shake the stars. From the divine point of view, heaven is the abode of that mercy which is death; whereas hell is the home of the immortals and the eternal outpost of hope. Goodby and good luck to you. And give my regards to your friend Steinmetz."

"Steinmetz? But Steinmetz was not a bad man."

"There you go again! Good or bad, he went to hell like a shot. So did Aristotle, and Francis Bacon, and Galileo, and Newton, and Darwin, and Michael Faraday in spite of all his piety, and Gregor Mendel in spite of his priest's cassock, and that old viking Thorstein Veblen who wrote 'The Place of Science in Modern Civilization.' Oh, you'll have excellent company."

On the brink of the abyss the old inventor halted and turned a troubled face to his celestial mentor. "There's just one thing," he murmured. "Henry . . . You know, I am greatly attached to Henry. Do you suppose—"

"I think so. Yes, I'm confident of it. Henry has a great many things to repent. He's a very unconventional man and he's still growing. Remember, also, that he's never asked for mercy—not even from the bankers."

Again through the gates of pearl came the shrill chorus of the Rotarians.

"They're welcoming an ex-President of the United States," explained Saint Peter. "You know him—a very good man. It seems he burst a blood-vessel broadcasting your funeral elegy."

The inventor smiled—with a certain diabolism. For already, in anticipation, the fires of hell warmed his heart with a fine glow of adult malice.

"Serve him right," he said. "I never liked him."

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In the Driftway

AS he isn't good at conundrums, the Drifter has been shamefully dilatory in answering a question posed by Margot R. Granger of Charlottesville, Virginia. "Having found you ever avid of discussion upon various topics, I write to ask what your idea is of the word virtue," is Miss Granger's simple plea. "Among a gathering of the younger generation," she goes on to say, "the word was given so many definitions, of such varying meanings, that I'm puzzled. To one it was merely an inconvenience upon occasions, to another a necessity, a third couldn't be worried as he was eating, another refused to discuss such a word in polite company, another even compared the word with altruism." Now if that isn't enough to spoil anybody's day the Drifter would like to know what could be. The dilemma of the Drifter's correspondent is that of every person nowadays who attempts to probe ever so little beneath the cuticle of things as they are. For the ancients, and for moderns too until psychology came along to upset us all, the question was different. The problem used to be to choose between Virtue and Vice, which invariably were spelled with capital letters as became such august deities. There never was any question as to what Virtue and Vice were.

* * * * *

BUT Virtue went under the scrutiny of the psychoanalysts, and when they got through with her she was spelled just virtue—and most illegibly at that. According to them virtue is a strange conglomeration of habit, superstition, the greed of the privileged, the hypocrisy of the powerful, together with a substantial residuum of hard common sense based on the human experience of the ages. To us moderns is given the problem of isolating and preserving that substantial residuum while scrapping the rest. Most persons of the older generation have frankly funked the job. Parents are often flabbergasted at the intelligent and reasonable questions of their children and unable to do more than move from event to event, powerless to formulate any fixed philosophy. For the most part the younger generation is just like them. So far as the Drifter can peer into the minds of high-school and college boys and girls today, they are unabashed pragmatists. They are hardly concerned at all with general principles; they are satisfied to seek day by day through personal experience the best way of life.

* * * * *

BUT the Drifter's correspondent reminds him that some persons of the younger generation are interested in principles and definitions. All the definitions of virtue reported by the Drifter's correspondent seem to have some validity. Undeniably virtue is an inconvenience upon occasions—although not *merely* that, as the Drifter's correspondent quotes one of her friends as saying. Virtue does seem also to be a necessity to most persons, which is what Voltaire meant when he said that if there had not been a God it would have been necessary for mankind to invent one. On the whole the Drifter likes best the answer which identifies virtue with altruism, for it suggests that virtue is concerned primarily with one's attitude toward other people.

THE DRIFTER

Correspondence

Einstein on Peace

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: Thank you for your editorial, Einstein on Peace, in *The Nation* for February 5. A few weeks ago it was my privilege to hear Professor Einstein speak to a group of international students at the Alexander Humboldt House in Berlin. Though the room was crowded, there was something about the man as he sat in his chair waiting to speak that created a peaceful quiet. His first words cast a spell over all of us, and for the two hours during which he spoke and answered questions in his simple and unaffected manner we felt that we were living in a world of peace. I am sure that none of us will ever forget the softness of his voice, the light in his eyes, and the truths that he spoke.

Berlin, February 20 SHEPARD ARTHUR STONE

Viva Voce Votes

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: I "viewed with alarm" your article about the Linthicum bill which proposes to make the Star Spangled Banner the official anthem of the nation. If a toothless flutist who plays chiefly by ear and beats time with both feet may qualify as a musical connoisseur, then I want to say a few words.

I submit that the Battle Hymn of the Republic is better in every way than the Star Spangled Banner or My Country 'Tis of Thee. If Congress is going to pick a national anthem I think it should qualify for the job by learning all three songs and singing them viva voce in joint session. Then, I'll bet that the Solons would do such a good job of the Battle Hymn of the Republic and make such a mess of the other two that without debate the Battle Hymn would get a unanimous and enthusiastic vote.

Portland, Oregon, February 20 ALBERT C. JOURDAN

Women and Wages

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: One encouraging feature stands out in the controversy which has followed Harvard's discharge of the scrubwomen at Widener Library. That is the offer of the Women's Trade Union League to organize the women workers at Harvard. We may be indignant at the employment policies of this wealthy university, our sympathy may go out to the hard-working women who have lost their jobs, but we should be even more concerned over the very low wages these women were receiving—over the very low wages paid women workers everywhere.

This is not the first time in Massachusetts or in other States that the minimum-wage law, which was designed to protect women, has interfered with their means of livelihood and forced them into even lower-paid employment. Any so-called protective legislation, such as the minimum-wage law, which applies to women and not to men helps fasten the burden of low wages on women. Any group of workers whose right to work is restricted by law is hampered in competing with other workers. If minimum-wage laws are necessary, let them apply equally to men and women.

Boston, February 4 ALMA LUTZ

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Books and Drama

Dialogue

By IRWIN EDMAN

And so I tell myself that this is peace,
This dark sweet lassitude, this musing death,
Where ardors sicken not, nor fires increase,
Nor any hope can stir the even breath.
I tell myself, "So must you always live,
Only this freedom is felicity,
They forfeit this who dare to take or give
A love that drowns them in a desperate sea,"
I tell myself. To which myself replies,
"*This peace you prattle is but tired regret,*
Your quietude is all compact of lies,
Your joy half built on what you half forget,"
Thus in the drowsing comfort once again,
The homesick heart, the immemorial pain.

Kaleidoscope

The 42nd Parallel. By John Dos Passos. Harper and Brothers. $2.50.

THE most striking quality about "The 42nd Parallel" is its structure. It is built after the manner of Aldous Huxley's "Point Counter Point" and of Mr. Dos Passos's own "Manhattan Transfer," but in one or two respects it is more intricate than either. It is really five novels shuffled together; among these are also shuffled excerpts called The Camera Eye and Newsreel. One reads, say, forty pages about the adventures of Mac, then a camera eye, then a newsreel, then a three-page biography of Debs, then thirty pages about the adventures of Janey, then another newsreel, then more about Mac, and so on. Toward the end the paths of two or three of the main characters cross, but haphazardly; there is no general drawing together of the threads, no climax, no rounding-out of anyone's story; things simply leave off, arbitrarily, anywhere.

It would be difficult to point to any unity in the book except that supplied by the binding. The forty-second parallel, as the reader will recall, is that imaginary circle of latitude which passes roughly through Chicago and slightly north of New York. But many of the events in the present volume happen in Mexico, New Orleans, and Paris. Apart from style and treatment, the themes have chiefly in common the fact that they represent various aspects of life in these United States. We begin with Mac, who picks up a job peddling Boccaccio and "The Queen of the White Slaves," gets a girl into trouble, marries her, deserts her, becomes a wobbly, drifts to Mexico, lives with a Mexican girl, runs a bookstore for a time. Next we follow Janey, who ends by becoming the adoring secretary of J. Ward Moorehouse, a go-getter and platitudinarian who has risen from a real-estate salesman and reporter to a public-relations counsel, and has married first the dissolute daughter of a nose-and-throat specialist and then, having divorced her, a Pittsburgh heiress, after he has spent the night with the latter on the day following her father's death. Next we come to Eleanor, who as a girl swears that she will kill herself if a man ever touches her; she becomes an interior decorator and enters into a platonic friendship with Moorehouse. We end with Charley, who drifts around as a garage mechanic, and doesn't marry his girl after she has been seduced by his friend. He winds up on a boat off for the war in France.

Mr. Dos Passos is a writer of extraordinary talent; he knows American cities, he knows a great deal about life, he has a shrewd insight into men and women. "The 42nd Parallel" is full of amusing incidents, and at times, particularly in the early pages, it is absorbing. But it leaves one wondering whether Dos Passos's present method is not more a handicap than a help to him. This kaleidoscopic shaking of the fragments of several novels into one no longer has the attraction of novelty, and its other advantages are not always clear. Dos Passos's present prose, too, seems to me greatly inferior to the prose of his "Three Soldiers." What he does here is simply to omit commas from their conventional places, link his statements together with the conjunction "and" as a substitute, and run phrases, nouns, and adjectives into single words, such as (all of these are from his first paragraph) "fourfamily," "whale-oil," "cavechested," "blondegrey," "nightwatchman."

The net result of these mannerisms, which have already become stereotyped in the writing of the whole school of "new barbarians," is that the style of one member of the school has become almost indistinguishable from that of another. It is a prose that rapidly tends to become monotonous. It may be said in defense of such undistinguished writing that it is perfectly adapted to record, as it does here, the adventures of undistinguished people. But where the characters are so aimless and unimportant the novel itself may come to seem aimless and unimportant. Dos Passos's men are interested only in women, liquor, and money; nearly all of them pass through the same weary cycles. Even the reds and revolutionists that he presents with sympathy are so much driftwood, without persistence, ambition, emotional or intellectual discipline. The reader sees the tired cynical smile on the face of the narrator, and begins to feel almost as tired himself. "The 42nd Parallel," in brief, shares the capital danger of all futilitarianism in fiction: the fiction is apt to seem as futile as the events it records.

I must, however, bear witness to the fascination of the nineteen "newsreels" scattered through the book. Here the kaleidoscopic method achieves some brilliant effects. Newspaper headlines, fragments of contemporary speeches, snatches of popular songs of each year, are splattered on the page apparently at random but actually with great skill. These newsreels, which begin with the dawn of the present century and end with the year of America's entrance into the World War, not only indicate the cultural background of each period of the story, but supply an amazingly compact history that combines the merits of Thomas Beer and Mark Sullivan. They reveal admirably the mores of each year, and are so arranged that one news item becomes a subtly ironic commentary on the next.

HENRY HAZLITT

A Romancer's Columbus

Columbus, Don Quixote of the Sea. By Jacob Wassermann. Little, Brown and Company. $3.50.

IN this biographical portrait of Columbus there is nothing new except the implications of the subtitle. The whole book is a glowing but unconvincing defense of the heroic. Columbus is seen as a *Schicksalsmensch,* the Don Quixote of the ocean, who sought not that which he found and found not that which he sought. Like the Knight of La Mancha, he was self-bewitched, a dark, unconscious idealist, one of God's fanatics. Incidents in Columbus's career that run counter to this romantic conception are simply rejected. Wassermann refuses to believe

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that Columbus during his first voyage ever wanted to turn back, because the very idea is full of "inner improbability." As for the factor which simpler and more cynically minded persons would denote as the key to Columbus's character, Wassermann has this to say: "His unappeasable thirst for gold is rooted in something far removed from greed. Don Quixote, with his mind full of the treasures of the Emperor of Trebizond, is not greedy; he merely considers these treasures as the tribute due him from the hands of destiny." This may be true of the Don, but it requires a considerable faith to believe it of the man who contracted so shrewdly and so greedily with Ferdinand and Isabella before he set foot on board his ship of discovery.

If it is easy to draw parallels between the two, it is easier still to mark divergences. It is true enough that Columbus, like Quixote, found something far different from what he sought, but in his case this was due to a geographical accident; in Quixote's, to a quirk of character. Columbus had nothing of the peculiar sweetness of Don Quixote, his ability to gain the love even of those who derided him. Don Quixote prevailed because he was a saint; Columbus because he was—among other things—a salesman. Wassermann admits that Columbus was a liar and an exaggerator; but surely he goes too far when he ascribes this to his hero's "visionary power."

The trouble with Wassermann, whose nature is intensely, almost feverishly moral, is that he cannot reconcile charlatanism with greatness. Therefore he has to rationalize or, better, mysticize what to many people would seem the qualities of a brave, daring, but greedy and unscrupulous trickster who played with commendable cleverness upon the religious susceptibilities of his employers and who was interested personally in the main chance. It is also possible that Wassermann has been misled by some obvious parallels in the exterior lives of his heroes; both suffered degradation, imprisonment, the incredulity of their contemporaries, etc. But not all Wassermann's eloquence can make these parallels seem other than accidental. As a work of lyric prose his book is valuable, but as a historical interpretation it is half-baked.

CLIFTON P. FADIMAN

Libertine and Libertarian

That Devil Wilkes. By R. W. Postgate. The Vanguard Press. $4.

JOHN WILKES is an important name in the history of civil and political liberty. It is imperishably linked with the establishment of some of the most fundamental of English constitutional rights. One cannot deny Wilkes the title of great libertarian. But, alas, he was no Plutarchian hero. As a libertine of the eighteenth century, his name is also linked with the orgies of the notorious Medmenham monks and with the celebrated "Essay on Woman" which incidentally helped to establish the English law of obscene libel. As a result, all of Wilkes's former biographers from Fitzgerald to Bleackley have approached him with a good deal of Victorian distaste and condescension. "Notwithstanding these services," observes Fitzgerald, "we find that the idea of a statue to John Wilkes somehow shocks the sensibilities." His honesty and sincerity have been questioned and he has been habitually referred to as the demagogue.

There was thus every need for a new life of Wilkes that should be more palatable to the modern. This Postgate biography is a highly amusing and rollicking account. The manner of its telling is the simple and straightforward one of the raconteur, and on the whole I doubt if the failure to employ Freudian technique upon so obvious a subject is to be deplored. For the first time Wilkes emerges entirely as a hero. He is exculpated upon every charge that has marred his reputation. He is defended against his wife; his diversions are treated as the natural ones of an eighteenth-century gentleman; he is cleared of the authorship of the "Essay on Woman"; and finally his reconciliation with the government of George III is explained as the result of a noble and renunciatory act of duty on his part in helping to quell the Gordon anti-Popery riots in London.

The truth is that Wilkes had risen to power and popularity as a champion of the merchant class which was fighting the feudal privileges of the aristocracy, and as a convenient instrument of the great Whig nobles against the Tories. The Gordon riots made clear to Wilkes, who was an astute politician, that his usefulness had ceased, and with his characteristic cynicism he "retired" into Parliament to support the government. One may quarrel with Mr. Postgate's view of Wilkes as a politician, but it would be ingratitude for a merciful and fascinating biography. The book should be read also as an example of that voluntary bowdlerization which our sex censorship accomplishes. It has taken a great deal of skill in innuendo to tell the story of John Wilkes the libertine.

WILLIAM SEAGLE

The Unthinkable War

America Conquers Britain. A Record of Economic War. By Ludwell Denny. Alfred A. Knopf. $4.

MR. DENNY develops on an elaborate scale a thesis similiar in the main to that which Nicholas Roosevelt has lately expounded more summarily in his "America and England?" namely, that America and Britain are economically at war, and that the economic superiority of America, actual and potential, makes the defeat of Britain only a matter of time. Where Mr. Roosevelt, however, treated his subject with special reference to its bearing upon the London naval conference, Mr. Denny keeps before his readers the possibility of an ultimate clash of arms. The "unthinkable war" is to him very thinkable indeed, not because either nation desires it, but because the economic conflict that is being waged is in fact a life-or-death struggle for Great Britain. There is no place in the world, Mr. Denny believes, for two such rivals for world economic dominion, and a "holy war" equipped with all the accustomed slogans of a great moral crusade may easily, all too easily, be launched once the economic struggle becomes sufficiently acute.

The evidence in support of this thesis is by no means entirely new, but Mr. Denny marshals it with startling effectiveness. At virtually every point at which the economic life of Great Britain is examined it is found to be ominously on the decline, and the decline is tending to become a rout under the powerful and often unscrupulous competition of the United States. As far as industrial efficiency goes there is no longer any doubt of American superiority. Britain is overpopulated; it has a vast and well-nigh insoluble problem of unemployment; restrictive immigration laws have closed the United States as an important outlet for a surplus population; and schemes of empire settlement have afforded thus far no effective relief. British labor is agitated and hungry; American labor reasonably contented and well fed. The Prince of Wales as a commercial drummer is an entertaining subject for editorials and after-dinner speeches, but American business, backed by an energetic Department of Commerce, is getting the world trade. Even the financial leadership which London still holds in the foreign loan market appears to Mr. Denny to be seriously threatened, partly because a declining British industry no longer produces a sufficient surplus of capital for export, and partly because financial support of foreign enterprises which in return are expected to buy in British markets results in giving an artificial support

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to British industries which would not otherwise be profitable.

Mr. Denny is particularly informing in the chapters which trace the world penetration of American capital, with its resultant control of foreign industries and commercial operations. His accounts of the affiliations of the General Electric Company, the International Telephone and Telegraph, and certain great banking and investment houses, of the fight for oil and other raw materials, and of the struggle of Great Britain to retain control of its radio and cable communications are an arresting exposure of the widening grip of American money and the American business mind. Mr. Denny does not write in praise of these things; on the contrary his criticism is often severe, and he shows no special reverence for distinguished names. Anyone who still imagines, for example, that Mr. Hoover is an economist or a statesman should read Mr. Denny's scathing review of the Hoover policy in attacking the British rubber monopoly.

The only prospect, as Mr. Denny sees the future, is for a continuance of what is now going on. Great Britain is "not succeeding," and there is no likelihood that it will succeed. "We were Britain's colony once. She will be our colony before she is done; not in name, but in fact." America will be too wise to try to govern the world; "we shall merely own it." "If Britain is foolish enough to fight us, she will go down more quickly, that is all." But she may fight when the American economic invasion has forced her to the last ditch. Good intentions are of little avail against economic facts, and professions of peace are quickly forgotten when a crisis arrives. Such is the possible future which Mr. Denny sees for two nations which have solemnly renounced war as an instrument of national policy.

WILLIAM MACDONALD

Into the Wilderness

The Great Meadow. By Elizabeth Madox Roberts. The Viking Press. $2.50.

FROM Albemarle westward a little cavalcade makes its way slowly. The smaller children ride; if a woman must carry a baby she rides also. Otherwise the horses are loaded with salt and lead, precious grain for journey cakes and for future sowing, an iron pot or two, a pewter tankard and spoon, linen woven in the plantation behind them, wool likewise. The men carry their rifles across their arms; in a rainstorm or while fording a river it is the powder that at all costs must be kept dry. The comforts of the plantation, the houses with board floors, the full larders, the riches of sheep and cattle and swine—all these have been put away from the little band. Around them the trackless forest sheds a dark, mysterious, mottled light. Ahead is their trail, poorly marked, stony going, over mountains and across streams—the road to Kentuck, the promised land, rich with cane fields, alive with Indians, a land for the taking, but one that only strong men can take.

This is the milieu of Miss Roberts's latest novel. She relates the progress of one such pilgrimage, that of Berk and Diony, from Five Oaks to Harrod's Fort in the late seventies of the eighteenth century. The civilization they leave behind them in Virginia is primitive enough, yet it knows comfort and plenty, the delights of Gray and Milton and Shakespeare as well as the solace of a full stomach and a warm back in winter. They ride forward into a land that is in the process of being wrested from the Indians. These Indians scalp women, they burn dwellings made with infinite patience by one pair of hands. Into this grim reality Berk and Diony go as bride and groom, into the protection of the little stockade at Harrod's Fort in Kentucky. There they know birth and death, the sweet joys of love, the pain of separation, the pinch of hunger and

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cold. There, too, Diony, who has married again after Berk's long absence has convinced her that he is dead, must make the bitter choice between him and her new husband when he unexpectedly returns.

All this Miss Roberts tells gravely, in rich detail, with insight, with tenderness, with a kind of slow candor that is very comforting in a day of books that tell their tale too swiftly. She never raises her voice; in an incident as heart-moving as that wherein Diony must make her difficult choice between two good men who love her and whom she loves there is no blustering, no hurry, no piling on of adverbs, no loud trumpeting of sobs and shouts of indecision. I am inclined to think, indeed, that a little of this drama would not have come amiss. For if Miss Roberts has a serious fault, it is an evenness of tempo that descends sometimes to monotony. She gives herself so unreservedly to understatement as to lose often the force of her remarks. Diony is evidently not without passion; but only the most careful reading discloses that Miss Roberts is trying, at times, to describe her as passionate. She carves herself a wooden spoon, she bears her child, she sends her husband off on a dreadful journey from which he may easily never return, all with the same even heat. I am told that she is gay, that she is weary, that when she is confronted by an Indian brave who is determined to scalp her she shrieks with terror. But I do not hear her laughter or her shrieks. She is like a lovely, rich figure in a tapestry, without sound, without movement.

For me all this difficulty is due to Miss Roberts's language. Her *mise en scène* moves me as does no other in literature. I am touched by the log houses, the great fireplaces, the gourds that hold salt or meal, the spinning, the candle-making, the pewter dishes, the linsey gowns. I am touched by the virtues that these men and women had in abundance: fortitude, humor, strength, ingenuity, a generous competence that could make the wilderness give them food and fire and the materials of a living. But I see Miss Roberts's figures through a fog of language. It is, to be sure, rich and lovely language. But it makes them vague, it permits them to move only slowly and thickly. It robs them, I believe, of life that they would otherwise have in great abundance. Nothing can be done about this, probably. Miss Roberts could not write any other way if she would; and there will be plenty of readers who will admire her for just this quality. For me the sound obstructs the sense, the manner obscures the matter. And in spite of it I am moved, I am interested, I am compelled to ride on through the fog because the meadow, I am convinced, lies just over the hill. If Miss Roberts ever does come into her great meadow it will be one of the literary gardens of her time.

DOROTHY VAN DOREN

The Nationalist East

A History of Nationalism in the East. By Hans Kohn. Translated from the German by Margaret M. Green. Harcourt, Brace and Company. $7.

MISS GREEN of *Foreign Affairs* has done the English-reading and English-speaking academic world a welcome service by translating so soon Dr. Kohn's "Geschichte der Nationalen Bewegung im Orient," which made its first appearance in Berlin only last year. It is an up-to-date and inclusive textbook in a field where such textbooks have been noticeably lacking. Hitherto scholars have treated Eastern nationalist movements individually for the most part, leaving travelers and popular writers to enjoy what has been a near-monopoly in the field of synthesis. Dr. Kohn's book is one of the few attempts that have yet been made to treat historically and between the covers of a single book those separate

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nationalist movements which have changed the face of Asia in the last century.

As a resident of Jerusalem, Dr. Kohn's observations on the peculiar status of Palestine are of special interest. He is among those who advocate the principle of equal political rights for Arabs and Jews regardless of changes in the relative numerical strength of the two groups. He is inclined to believe that the world may yet see in Palestine the development of a new conception of the state as an institution in which government will be conducted for the economic benefit of the entire population, while the cultural or so-called nationalist affiliations of the individual citizen will concern the government as little as his religion does at present in any secularized state.

Some of the most interesting of Dr. Kohn's general observations, appearing in the first six chapters of the book, may be best understood after reading Chapters VII to XII inclusive, in which are traced in varying degrees of detail the nationalist movements in Egypt, Turkey, the territories under Class A mandate, the Arabian peninsula, Persia, Afghanistan, Turkestan, and India. In this section the author succeeds to a remarkable extent in divesting himself of the condescension that marks the works of certain other historians who have applied themselves to a discussion of contemporary affairs in the East. His chapter on Egypt, for example, offers a distinct contrast to those comparatively recent histories of Egypt in which the development of the country has been represented as depending almost altogether on the patience and wisdom of an alien occupying Power, while the inhabitants themselves are treated somewhat like supernumeraries in a play, to set off the brilliance of the main actors. The Egypt of Dr. Kohn's work is an Egypt inhabited by Egyptians, not by Englishmen. Realism has replaced a familiar sentimentality in his approach to the subject; he is quite aware of the reasons for which the European press and European diplomats habitually represent the Egyptian struggle for freedom "not as an act of patriotism but as an outburst of fanaticism directed against Europeans, and a revolt of irresponsible soldiers and agitators against all authority and order." His portrayal of the nationalist movement in Egypt is based, therefore, on a study of what Egyptians themselves have been saying and thinking and doing for several decades rather than on the interpretation placed by Europeans on Egyptian activities.

It is not surprising that his conclusions should differ somewhat from those of conventional European accounts. "The spirit in which [Arabi Pasha's] reforms were begun," he writes, "gave ground for hope that without English intervention Egypt would have developed along liberal lines. True, the condition of the country was described otherwise in the English reports; for they were designed to justify intervention. But in reality 1882 was not a year of mutiny and bloodshed and disorder, but of an awakening national consciousness throughout the younger generation of Egyptians." And in a preceding passage he asserts that in fact peace and order did prevail in Egypt during this brief period of national government: "The attempt to reorganize and revolutionize the whole conduct of life was accompanied by far less disorder than has been the case elsewhere." This judgment is characteristic in the sense that the author has not been content to base his conclusions on commonly accepted accounts of contemporary or past events, but has considered with care evidence that has escaped the attention of previous writers. Particularly gratifying is it to find in his account a review of the contributions to the development of nationalism made by various Eastern writers and thinkers concerning whose lives and work little has been written heretofore in English.

In the first six chapters of the book Dr. Kohn has evaluated the religious movements in Asia, and especially in the world of Islam—movements which are the outcome, he believes, of the ferment accompanying a great historic process

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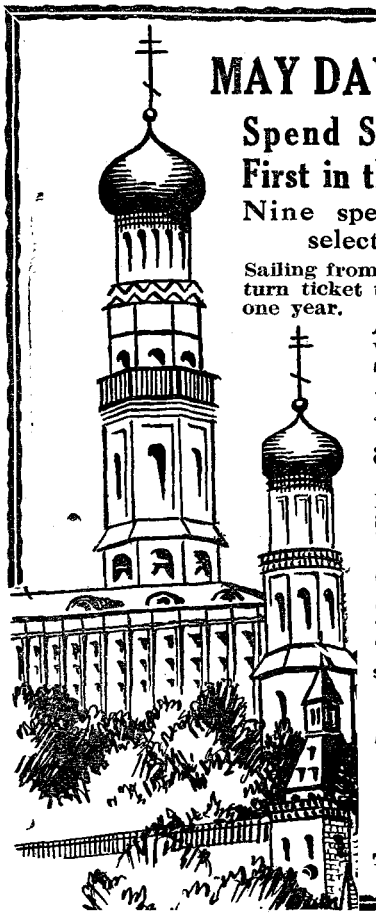

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which is entirely reshaping the intellectual and social life of the East. He has then proceeded to analyze the effects of Great Britain's influence upon the Orient and the far-reaching ramifications of the Russian Revolution. As a corollary of European aggression he finds that "it is precisely in nationalism that the consciousness of Eastern unity originates. For the present it is a sentiment of defensive solidarity in face of a united white race. But it may be the first step toward a world consciousness which for the first time in history will embrace mankind as a whole." ELIZABETH P. MACCALLUM

Illumination

Firehead. By Lola Ridge. Payson and Clarke. $2.50.
The Black Christ and Other Poems. By Countee Cullen. Harper and Brothers. $2.

CONSTANT repetition has robbed the story of the crucifixion of almost all emotional force. Poets have often tried to breathe life into the story by reinterpreting it. By reducing the supernatural element, they have hoped to achieve a more credible story and thus to make a more powerful impact upon modern readers. Sometimes they have, by requiring us to adjust ourselves to the idea of, say, Judas as a hero, disrupted the usual pattern of responses. Such methods have not infrequently resulted in a certain vigor and freshness. But there is another way of bringing life to the dead bones of the too familiar. Negro spirituals of the crucifixion make, as a rule, more impression on our sensibilities than any carefully conceived revision of the legend. They do so because the authors did not feel the remoteness of the story in time and place, and because the personal implications of the events were to them altogether real and even novel.

But the conditions which made possible the spirituals do not exist today among either Negroes or whites. When, therefore, Lola Ridge accomplishes—in, of course, a richer and more sophisticated way—precisely what is accomplished by the spirituals, one recognizes that the poetic imagination has performed an extraordinary feat. There is no novelty in the conception of the events and characters of "Firehead," and the fictitious elements that have been introduced are strictly limited by the outlines of the tradition. Nevertheless, Miss Ridge's telling of the story utterly breaks through conventional responses; the events she describes are alive and almost terrifyingly close to us.

Somehow, out of her own intimate acquaintance with suffering, Miss Ridge has found a way to plunge herself into the midst of the happenings of the crucifixion day. She has conceived for herself the uniqueness of Jesus, and she has recreated the effect which the death of such a person would have on his associates. And then, by a tremendous effort, an effort perhaps too apparent to the reader, she has contrived means for the communication of her vision.

To such an achievement one must yield full measure of appreciation. The power of the poet's imagination, the beauty of innumerable passages, and the sustained force of the poem as a whole impress the most critical reader as evidences of an uncommon talent. It is enough, one must repeat, to have made real and affecting the sufferings of Jesus and the struggles of the disciples. And yet Miss Ridge has not been able to do the one thing—it was almost certainly impossible—that would have given her poem enduring greatness. Though the events of the crucifixion have for her both a personal and a kind of cosmic significance, she has not succeeded in making that significance completely felt by the modern mind.

The quality of Miss Ridge's achievement can be measured by the failure of Countee Cullen to accomplish a simpler task in "The Black Christ." The poem has merits of its own, but

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clarity of conception is not one of them. In general, Mr. Cullen's talents do not seem to be developing as one might wish; there is in the poems in his new book an uncertainty of tone that is not offset by the lyric skill for which his work is always distinguished.

GRANVILLE HICKS

Books in Brief

Pay Day. By Nathan Asch. Brewer and Warren. $2.50.

This story is a studied report rather than a novel. But it is a swiftly moving, accurate, and engrossing report. Jim is a thirty-dollar-a-week clerk. He is very young and it is pay day. And he has a date with a new girl. He boards the Bronx-bound subway express, washes up and has supper, and "beats it" back downtown again to keep his date. Jim's thoughts roam a dark forest. They are dominated by fear and sex urge in turn. So he wants to fight every man and he has thoughts about every girl. He dreams of becoming a traveling salesman—plenty of "jack," living in hotels and riding in Pullmans, plenty of drinks and cigars, with women in every town. He and Helen go to the movies; then to Paddy's back-room speakeasy. What a night! Jim gets drunk, then sick. Helen leaves him for another boy. And Jim arrives home at dawn broke, ill, savage, and remorseful. There are thousands of pimply-faced Jims in every big city. Mr. Asch has done an excellent study of the type.

The Hidden City. By Philip Gibbs. Doubleday, Doran and Company. $2.50.

Through the clear eyes of the thirty-five-year-old Doctor Jevons, Sir Philip Gibbs looks out on the tumultuous life of London streets and ponders on such subjects as poverty, the post-war generation of slim-legged young girls and neurotic boys, sex in young lives in our hectic megalopolitan civilization, and free will or determinism—which? All this is not to deny the fact that his latest novel also contains a good story. After Doctor Jevons puts up his brass plate on the door of his house in Walpole Street, he becomes drawn into an ever-widening circle of troubled lives, many of which—since one patient leads to another—are intertwined. It is a good idea. There is a mild Dickensian flavor about this story with its dramatic, sentimental, and heroic moods, though the philosophy is contemporary. And if in place of the villain there are glands, environment, heredity, neuroses, complexes, yet in the figure of the intelligent and tolerant young doctor the author has provided his readers with a perfect modern knight for a hero.

Audacious Audubon. By Edward A. Muschamp. Brentano's. $3.50.

The story of John James Audubon, the Frenchman who became one of America's greatest naturalists, is of an order that always has a wide appeal—that of the man who achieves fame after years of failure, almost disgrace. Having lost his original fortune, and having failed in his many efforts to retrieve it because of his own neglect of what he felt to be his duties and responsibilities, this Audubon, encouraged and aided by a remarkable wife, finally gathered together the by-products of twenty years of "folly" (his bird pictures) and set forth to conquer the world—in his own field. The story of the succeeding fourteen years is the story of his extraordinary work, "Birds of America," originally published in four gigantic volumes, each volume three feet three inches high and two feet five inches wide, the size being due to Audubon's obsession that all his bird portraits should appear life-size, even the wild turkey. After this book came international fame, followed by other books. Mr. Muschamp's admiration for his hero, though it affects his

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A critical appraisal by Joseph Wood Krutch of the work of D. H. Lawrence, whose death has just been announced.

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judgment, has not led him to distort or conceal important facts, all of which are to be found in the two-volume biography by Francis Hobart Herrick published about twelve years ago. "Audacious Audubon" is in no sense a critical biography, nor, as a study of the man, does it penetrate very far beneath the surface, but it is a spirited retelling of a tale which in itself contains all the necessary elements of drama.

The Overland Trail. By Agnes C. Laut. Frederick A. Stokes Company. $3.50.

Endeavoring to combine history with present conditions in a picture which would show both the pioneer and the grown-up stages of an important section of the country, Miss Laut has achieved little more than a jumble. In her pages the past jostles the present rather than runs along beside it or blends with it, the effect not being helped by the author's tendency to gush. The Oregon Trail was indeed what the subtitle of this book calls it—an "epic path." But it was not made in a single bold stroke. On the contrary it was formed bit by bit, by new bands of adventurers pushing on from the point reached by preceding explorers. Nor was it a simple, direct line. Rather was it a set of rough routes over land and through streams. These routes would have presented a colorful scene to one who could have viewed them from a low-flying airplane, with their caravans of horsemen and wagons, their hovering Indians, their occasional forts. This panorama Miss Laut depicts, partly in her own words, partly in quotations from the diaries and other accounts left by a few of those who made the perilous journey. But her story is neither clear nor comprehensive. For a proper historical record one must turn elsewhere.

The Gothick North: A Study in Mediaeval Art, Life, and Thought. By Sacheverell Sitwell. Houghton Mifflin Company. $5.

The English poet writes a "history of the tall, fair-haired races in Art," containing a few admirable and poetic re-creative studies of tapestries, castles, and monasteries, together with much quite extraneous matter in which he airs his ideas, his prejudices, and his hates.

Drama

For the Defense

"THE Plutocrat," Booth Tarkington's defense of Babbittism, has been adapted for the stage of the Vanderbilt Theater, where it is acted with genial abandon by Mr. and Mrs. Coburn. In it Earl Tinker, Napoleon of the meat trade, blunders from his native Omaha across the ocean to Egypt, and by the simple process of stepping firmly on everyone's toes succeeds in revealing to all the real greatness of American character. He sings "Sweet Adeline" in the smoking-room, he slaps the foreign adventuress on the back, and he exhibits the depth of his homely humor by addressing a sensitive young Frenchman named Hyacinthe as Hollyhock, Heliotrope, and Hibiscus; but (though one would hardly believe it without the incontrovertible evidence of the play itself) they like it, and it is only the most absurd of his countrymen who object. Earl has, to be sure, neither manners in the conventional sense nor even the most rudimentary beginning of that capacity to understand the tastes of another upon which manners are founded; yet this fact only serves to convince his victims that he is the modern analogue of the Roman conqueror, and when that dubious compliment has been paid to his hero Mr. Tarkington is content. He has set out to demonstrate not only that Babbitt is likable but that Europeans like him, and he is apparently satisfied that he has established his contention.

Now most controversy cast in the form of drama or fiction is peculiarly futile for the simple reason that the controversialist is able to invent all the evidence upon which his argument is based, and this fact is responsible for one of the many defects of "The Plutocrat." Thus it is, for example, far from clear where Mr. Tarkington got his idea that Babbitt is better liked abroad than he is in the more effete portions of his native country; for though, perhaps, he ought to be, I at least have never observed any tendency on the part of the English or the French to judge him with that affectionate leniency which the play represents as typical; and if I remember my history aright the Greeks did not generally regard the Roman conquerors who rode roughshod over their decadent civilization with any particularly genial admiration. Yet the most striking of all the striking things about "The Plutocrat" is not this dubious premise concerning the attitude of Europe toward the magnates of the Middle West, but the plain fact that Mr. Tarkington has drawn a libelous portrait of his hero, and out of the depths of his admiration attributed to him speeches and actions which would be set down to extravagant malice had they been imagined by a Lewis or a Mencken.

If Mr. Armour, Mr. Ford, and Mr. Du Pont were outward bound on the Ile de France they would not put their arms around one another's shoulders and make the timbers ring with barber-shop ditties. Any one of them would probably know what an "impresario" is, and not one would be likely to inquire "house or sign" when introduced to a young man who is described as a painter. Neither is it probable that Mrs. Chrysler would take her husband publicly by the ear because she saw him talking to an attractive woman, or even that any captain of industry would habitually dismiss all inhabitants of the Atlantic seaboard as "frozen-faced Easterners." Yet such is the behavior attributed by Mr. Tarkington and his adapter to men supposed to be of equal eminence, though represented as possessing habits, tastes, and opinions which would disgrace the proprietor of a village filling station.

Much can be said for the American, but these authors seem singularly unfitted to say it. By some strange twist of mind, they are led to suppose that a comic-strip husband sneaking away from a termagant wife constitutes a convincing picture of our superior family life and that, in general, the best way to exalt our countrymen is to label a gross exaggeration of all their most obvious defects "American virtue." We can survive our enemies; but may God defend us from such friends as these, and preserve us from the folly of the ass in Swift's fable who boasted of his voice while confessing that his ears were, perhaps, a little too short.

The "International Revue" (Majestic Theater) is an elaborate spectacle featuring Harry Richman, Gertrude Lawrence, Florence Moore, and Jack Pearl. Most of the scenes fail dismally to come off.

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

It is hardly necessary to remark that "Simple Simon" with Ed Wynn at the Ziegfeld Theater is as uproarious a revue as one is likely to see. Mr. Wynn has simply to remark that he loves the woods to send any normal person into gales of laughter. And he is supported by charming Urban scenes and by some of the most original and lovely Broadway dancing that has yet appeared, even under Mr. Ziegfeld's auspices.

In "The Infinite Shoeblack" (Maxine Elliott's Theater) a poor Scotch Puritan falls in love with a notoriously promiscuous woman, reforms her by talking about her soul and the virtues of child-bearing, and marries her. Although there is much lofty quotation from Carlyle, the play is essentially a melodrama, and most of its humorous moments are not intended.

H. H.

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The Massacre at Aux Cayes

By L. J. de BEKKER

A PEACEFUL day in Aux Cayes, a little port in Haiti chiefly busied in shipping coffee to France. A week of student demonstrations and a dock strike had just ended part of the general strike which included even the lawyers of Haiti and resulted from the troubles that Dr. Freeman, head of the $1,000,000 agricultural school at Damien, brought upon himself by his shortsighted treatment of the students. The marines had been restrained from a bayonet charge against a procession of striking students; Lieutenant Fitzgerald Brown, U. S. M. C., sub-commander of the military district, had proclaimed the rigors of martial law; and on December 5 there was no visible disorder, although the strike leaders were holding a conference in a warehouse. Out of a cloudless sky came three naval airplanes, which circled the city discharging machine-guns and rifles, dropping shell-cases from time to time, then flying out over the bay where they discharged real bombs. Terror-stricken men, women, and children ran into streets, where they were joined by the strikers, all expecting instant death. But they did not cry for mercy; they shouted: "A bas l'Occupation! A bas Borno!" No one was injured, and when this "demonstration of force" had continued for an hour, the naval planes flew away in the direction of Port au Prince. Secure in their barracks-fortress, the marines this time made no attempt to restore order. The people of Aux Cayes were permitted to rage through the streets and shout "Down with the Occupation!" and "Down with Borno!" until they calmed down through sheer exhaustion.

That same day in Port au Prince, R. M. Cutts, signing himself "Colonel, United States Marines, Commanding First Brigade, United States Marine Corps and United States forces ashore in Haiti," had proclaimed martial law in Port au Prince, ordered the inhabitants to be in their houses by 9 p. m. and to remain there until daylight, and informed them that "articles or speeches of an incendiary nature or those that reflect adversely upon the United States forces in Haiti or tend to stir up agitation against United States officials" would constitute offenses to be brought to trial before a military tribunal. Thereupon all the Opposition newspapers suspended publication.

Captain Evans, U. S. M. C., major general and commandant of the Garde d'Haïti, and Sergeant Belton, U. S. M. C., lieutenant in the Garde d'Haïti, telegraphed the Associated Press and the United Press, for which they were correspondents, that trouble was apprehended in Aux Cayes, and that a shipment of arms had been received there from Guatemala.

They were wrong about the arms from Guatemala, but right about trouble at Aux Cayes. The correspondents of the Associated Press and the United Press wired their American offices the first news of the massacre at Aux Cayes, saying that five Haitians had been killed and several wounded by marines in suppressing disorders arising from the strike. All Haiti knew next day how inaccurate these figures were, but the *Temps*, the *Presse*, and other Opposition newspapers could not give the correct report and the Occupation press stuck to "five killed and several wounded." This was the story, of course, that appeared in American newspapers.

Murmurs of dissatisfaction with the official figures became too much for Colonel Cutts, and to suppress them he sent an official communiqué to the Haitian newspapers, which they published at his request on January 7, without comment. The Cutts communiqué reads as follows:

> It is requested that a brief report be published relative to the events at Cayes of December 6, 1929.
>
> The inquiry having terminated, and the last reports having been received, the following facts are established:
>
> A mob of 1,000 to 1,500 persons, more or less drunk, marched on Cayes from the neighborhood of Torbeck, encountered a patrol of twenty marines at the passage of the river, and were stopped by the patrol. The mob agreed to return home if the strike at Cayes should prove to be ended. Leaders of the crowd were permitted to enter Cayes to reassure themselves, and declared on returning that the strike in Cayes was over. The mob violated its promise and refused to go home. A number of functionaries and men of eminence in the town then approached the mob and urged them to be reasonable and to turn back, but without result. Then the mob began to surround the patrol, and the latter fired over their heads in an attempt to stop them. They halted, but again advanced. The patrol again fired over their heads, but this failed to stop them. Night was approaching. The mob then surrounded the patrol, which, in legitimate defense, fired in earnest. The first volley was with muskets, but when this failed to halt the mob, the marines fired with machine-guns and automatics. The machine-guns fired twenty-four cartridges in a fixed position. The fusillade ceased the moment the mob abandoned its attack. The firing was directed low against the legs, for the purpose of checking the mob while killing as few as possible. Reports from the hospital demonstrate that all wounds made in bodies were caused by ricocheted bullets. First reports received stated that five were killed and twenty-five wounded; final reports from the hospital at this date say ten were killed and twenty-four wounded. There is little probability that there will be any changes from this final report. If the patrol had wished, or if it had intended to kill, three or four hundred persons could have been easily struck down. The weapons utilized were of the government standard type, such as were used in the World War. There are no longer any other kind here.
>
> There have been no disorders in Cayes or in the neighborhood since. But as many unfounded rumors have been placed in circulation, it is desired that this short statement of the affair be published.

This circumstantial if unveracious narrative only made matters worse. The communiqué, after a delay of a month for Colonel Cutts's inquiry, raised the figures still being published in the United States from "five killed and several wounded" to "ten killed and twenty-four wounded." But

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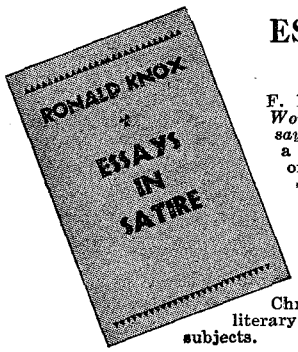

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by this time news had been published of President Hoover's intention to send a commission to Haiti. Colonel Cutts accordingly permitted the Haitian dailies to publish a list of the dead on January 16, giving names, ages, residences, and the nature of the wounds. The dead numbered twenty-four. Among them was a woman of twenty-six, a boy of eight. One of those "ricocheted" bullets caught the boy 300 feet away from the mob, while he was down in the ravine giving his horse a drink. Another of the dead was not attacking the marines when slain; he was buying cigarettes. On January 17 Colonel Cutts permitted the Haitian dailies to publish a list of the wounded, with names, addresses, et cetera. They numbered fifty-one. The American Occupation has not disputed these figures: twenty-four killed and fifty-one wounded. The marines withdrew to their barracks immediately after the massacre, leaving the dead and wounded alone in the dark all night, except for such aid as the Haitians could render. Haitian physicians hurried to the scene next day. The unsupported evidence of some of the Haitians is that they counted the dead, that the total was 212, and the number of the wounded proportionately greater. The real figures may never be disclosed, but the President's commission may get some light on the subject. Meantime the State Department and the Navy Department at Washington decline to give any information to the press.

Two narratives of the events at Aux Cayes, both written on the spot by eyewitnesses, are before me. They corroborate each other. I give one in translation.

> Friday, December 6. This day, destined to end in tragedy, opens with a somewhat comic incident, worthy of a place in burlesque: a gendarme undertakes arbitrarily to arrest a workman, who (assisted, it is true, by some comrades) gives him a sound drubbing. Work is resumed. Except for the lingering emotions aroused by the day before, normal life has recommenced. But in the afternoon two airplanes fly over the town, this time peacefully.
>
> Toward five o'clock there is great alarm. Announcement is made that a considerable crowd which has come from the borough and the plain of Torbeck (principally from Gauvain) is about to enter Aux Cayes. According to information at hand they do not come as enemies. They are persons who believe the rumors that Aux Cayes has really been bombarded by airplanes; who had heard that the strikers in Aux Cayes had obtained satisfaction; and who wished to claim for themselves abolition of the tax on alcohol and removal of the seals put on their stills, both of which mean ruin for the proprietors of sugar plantations and of small distilleries. Down there in the country misery is killing them. Their molasses, when it finds a buyer, is paid for at a fifth of its price, at one-tenth of the price of certain epochs. They have not the means to build the costly reservoirs demanded by the tax service, nor to pay the tax on the production of alcohol. All along the road the protestants, among whom are well-known citizens, have been joined by peasants and women, the latter chiefly from nearby neighborhoods. Later on the charge was made that some of these persons carried, carefully concealed, machetes and even small pikes. This has been strongly contradicted. What is true is that some of the horsemen carried small sticks for their mounts, or simple whips made of ox sinews. But nearly all had empty hands. It was not an armed band.
>
> The crowd crosses the ravine and marches toward the Calvary of the Sacred Heart. They had intended, it was said, to remove the seals from the distilleries of Quatre Chemins, which had been closed by the tax office. Georges Butreau on the one side and Ulysse Simon on the other, former military chiefs of the district, dissuade them from this purpose, however, and fuming and cursing they turn back, massing themselves to the number of three to four hundred on the far side of the ravine to await, they say, the return of some of their companions from town.
>
> A detachment of twenty to twenty-five marines arrive, armed with machine-guns and automatic repeating rifles, and post themselves at the corner of the Avenue des Gabions, near the bridge facing the ravine, covering these poor people, who do not show any intention either to advance or retreat. The district sub-commander [Lieutenant Fitzgerald Brown] goes to them and tries to persuade them to retire. Several citizens of Aux Cayes—Maître Duclervil, dean of the lawyers' association, Maître Joseph V. Delerme, some civic authorities, Edmond Sylvain, government commissary, and Antoine Ferrer, president of the Communal Commission—then cross the river, tell the crowd that all manifestations have been stopped in Aux Cayes, and advise them to go home. But they insist on the liberation of three of their companions who have been detained. They give the names of the prisoners to Maître Delerme. The sub-commander of the district promises to give them satisfaction on this point. They insist upon the removal of the distillery seals. There is hubbub and tumult. And all this time the barrels of the American rifles are pointed on the unfortunates, notwithstanding the presence among them of the conferees. Some women throw stones, which cannot reach the marines but fall into the river or in the dry part of the ravine. The parleys continue. The unfortunate wretches do not imagine for an instant that they will be fired upon.
>
> It is sunset. A resounding oath is heard and suddenly the fusillade begins, first blank shots and then almost immediately the murderous rattle of the machine-guns. In the midst of horrible screams, men, women, children, and horses fall. There is a stampede. One distiller from Gauvain, who had come on a handsome horse, unharnesses the dead animal and leaves with saddle and reins. The scene is horrifying. One hears the screams and moans of the wounded (they are going to pass the night under the stars), the death rattles of those in agony. There is the twenty-year-old son of Surveyor Molin struck dead. Night arrives. The marines withdraw.
>
> The news throws the town into consternation. The wounded come in to have their injuries dressed in the drugstores. These are mostly innocent bystanders who have had no time to move away. The machine-guns and rifles have worked in all directions, to the south, where the crowd had chiefly gathered, as well as to the north, east, and west. Houses in the region are riddled with bullets and peaceful inhabitants killed or wounded in their homes.
>
> Some victims are carried to the hospital. The rumor is spread that, furious against the people of Aux Cayes who had let them be massacred, the crowd had reformed their lines at Coquette in order to invade the town during the night and deliver it over to pillage. However, the night is very quiet. Toward three o'clock shots are heard. They come from the marines at General Headquarters. Nobody replies, for there was neither a riot nor an organized rebellion, as the rumor promised.

American physicians, according to both eyewitnesses, withdrew after the massacre to marine headquarters, where there were no wounded, leaving their Haitian colleagues the care of the dying and wounded, not only in the field, but afterwards in the hospital.

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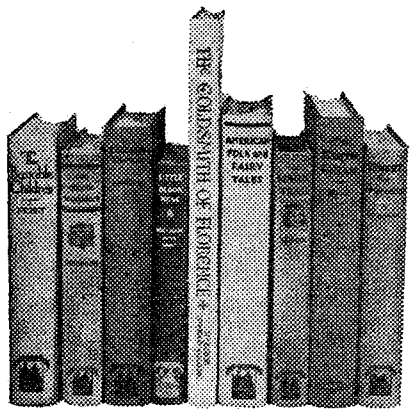

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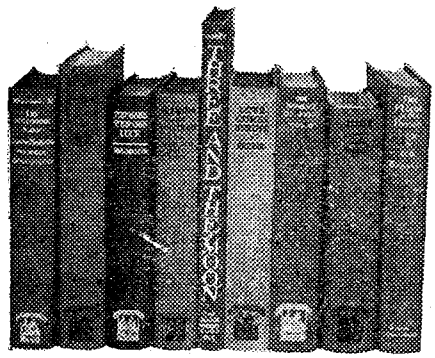

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